







## Dedication

This book is dedicated to Town Historian Richard Schmal. Without his extensive research and attention to detail, this publication would never have been possible.

A charter member of the Three Creeks Historical Association, Mr. Schmal served on the Lowell Centennial Committee in 1952 and was an active member of the Lowell Sesquicentennial Committee, which has

planned the 150th anniversary observance of the town's founding for 2002.

Mr. Schmal has provided assistance to untold numbers of persons trying to locate ancestors in the Lowell area.

Each month he researches one aspect of the town's history and prepares an interesting article for publication in our local newspaper.

In addition, Mr. Schmal often dresses in period costume

and presents informative programs to elementary and high school students. He has also written scripts and produced walking tours of Lowell.

In his quest to keep our rich history alive, Mr. Schmal serves with a unit of Civil War reenactors.

It is with sincere gratitude that we honor Mr. Schmal for unselfishly giving so much to his hometown for the past eight decades.





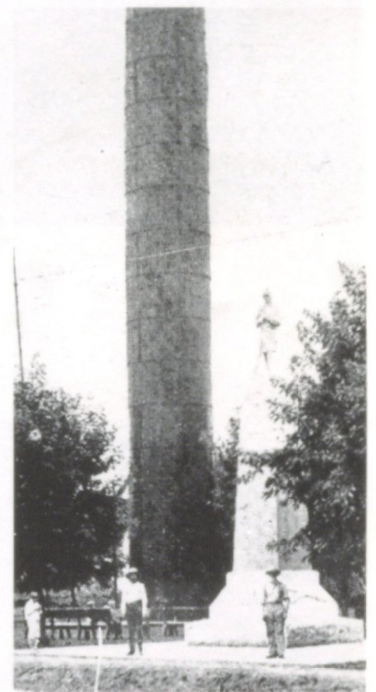






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# Lowell keeps hometown feeling alive

It's been said that Lowell has remained relatively untouched by time.

For many longtime residents, the hometown feeling that first attracted them to Lowell is the exact reason they remain here today.

Drive through the historic downtown business district, past its manicured parks and down any residential street and you get the feeling of what a hometown should be.

Many 19th Century buildings and homes still grace the streets of our town and serve as a daily reminder of Lowell's lively history.

Lowell was founded in 1852 by Melvin A. Halsted. He built a flour mill which was pivotal to the economy of south Lake County. He also constructed a church, brick schoolhouse

and a home for his family.

Halsted would later help bring mail service and a railroad to town.

Our founding father's investment in Lowell, along with his family's desire to build a friendly community, led to prosperity and growth. The Halsted legacy still remains today as the town celebrates the 150th anniversary of its founding.

The years have been kind to Lowell. And the community's 7,505 residents couldn't be happier.

Residents still smile and wave at each other. They take care of each other and watch over their neighbor's children. They hold hometown values dear.

Community spirit is a way of life. There's hardly an available seat in the grandstands at Lowell High School

when the Red Devils take to the turf. And it's standing room only at every community event from a church-sponsored pancake breakfast to a dance to benefit a local anti-landfill organization.

Through the efforts of the Lowell Chamber of Commerce, the Lowell Downtown Merchants Association and the Lowell Mainstreet Association, the town's downtown business district bustles with community activities such as the annual four-day Oktoberfest celebration, Cobe Cup Cruise, Hometown Heros Day, Lil' Britches Day, Sidewalk Sale, Antique Auto Show, Small Town Christmas Celebration and the Festival of Lights Christmas Parade.

But nothing compares to the sight of people lined up six rows deep along

Commercial Avenue from Holtz Road to Harding Drive each Labor Day for the annual Lowell Labor Day Parade. The oldest continuous Labor Day observance in the state, the parade was started in 1919 as a homecoming welcome for World War I veterans.

The future looks even more promising for Lowell.

With Chicago's bustling business and entertainment districts just an hour away, more people than ever are combining big city employment and socializing with the amenities afforded by small town living.

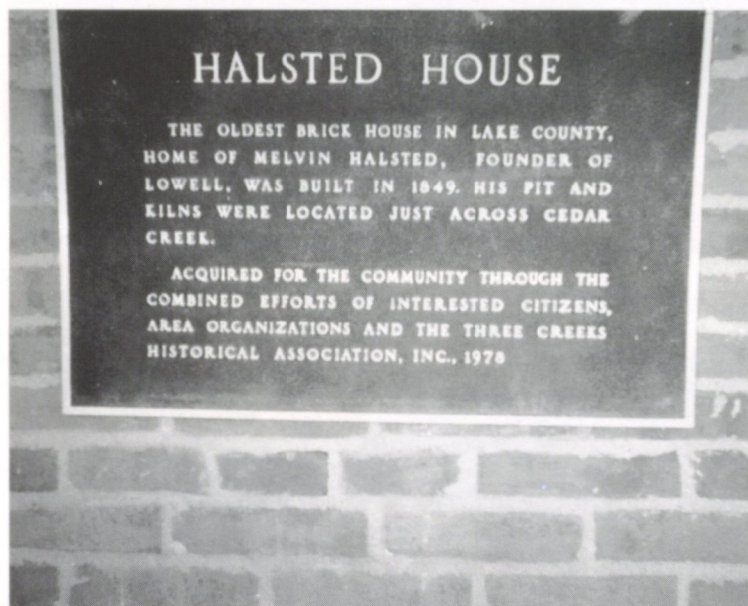
And with Interstate 65 at its back door, U.S. 41 at its front door and rail service through its center, Lowell is prime territory for even more residential, commercial and industrial growth in the next 150 years.







The Halsted House, 201 E. Main St., was constructed by the town's founding father Melvin A. Halsted in 1849. Now owned by the Three Creeks Historical Association, the historic treasure has been restored and is being opened as a museum during the town's 150th birthday celebration. The building is currently the only property in Lowell listed on the National Register of Historical Places.



The bricks which were used to construct Melvin A. Halsted's historic two-story residence were made in Lowell at a kiln located near the intersection of what we know today as Halsted and Main streets.



John Sutton, left, Three Creeks Historical Association founder Ray McIntire and Town Board Member Nelson Clark pose outside the Halsted House in 1979.



# Halsted's vision led to growth

*Well-traveled founder began platting out town's first 16 lots in 1852*

Melvin Amos Halsted, the man who would discover Lowell, was born in Rensselaer County, New York, on March 29, 1821.

Then ancestry of the Halsted family can be traced back to William The Conqueror.

Melvin's grandfather Joseph Halsted and his father William Halsted farmed an estate on the bank of the Hudson River. It was here that the lad lived until he was 14 years of age, attending the public schools, and later, the high school in Bennington, Vt.

Following the death of his father in 1837, Halsted moved with his mother to Dayton, Ohio, where he engaged in farming.

He married Martha C. Foster of Troy, Pa., in 1842 and the couple continued to reside in Ohio until 1845, when they moved with Halsted's mother to Lake County, Ind.

They purchased an 80-acre farm west of Lowell in West Creek Township on which Belshaw Road now stands.

Halsted farmed the land for three years, then moved to an area which would later become the town of Lowell. The family resided in a cabin near the site of the old Monon Railroad Depot.

In 1848, Halsted went into partnership with O.E. Haskin and purchased a mill site from area pioneer Abram Nichols. By January 1849, a saw mill was in operation near what we know today as the intersection of Halsted and Main streets.

During the same year, Halsted burned 400,000 bricks, part of which were used to construct a new two-story residence for the Halsted family.

The well-constructed home, a mansion in its day, still stands today at 201 E. Main St. Now owned by the Three Creeks Historical Association, the house is listed on the National Register of Historical Places.

A rather unusual event took place on Nov. 29, 1850, when Halsted's mother-in-law Ruth Cornelia Foster died. The next day, his own mother,



MELVIN A. HALSTED

Patty Halsted died. The women had been close friends and neighbors and were buried in a double grave in West Creek Township.

Following the death of his mother, Halsted was lured by the discovery of gold in California and set out toward the dangerous and deadly plains.

He started the trip on horseback, then drove teams of oxen, finishing the trip of over 100 days with mule teams.

Halsted acquired a fortune in the gold fields and returned to Lowell in 1852 to invest his money.

After purchasing the interest of his partner O.E. Haskin he erected a flour mill on Mill Street. The machinery for the mill was hauled to town in wagons from Chicago.

About the same time, a small brick

school house was built at what is known today as 408 E. Commercial Ave.

Historian Timothy H. Ball wrote that this was the site of the first meeting of the Baptist Church of Lowell, organized on Jan. 20, 1856. Their own building, located at the corner of Mill and Main streets, was dedicated in June 1857. This church, also constructed of brick, was built under the supervision of Halsted at a cost of \$2,000. The church was torn down in 1905.

Halsted served as Sunday School superintendent under the pastorate of the Rev. John Bruce at the Baptist church.

The building which now sits on the site was constructed in 1907 by the Presbyterian Church and was later

used by several other denominations. The building is currently being used as Dr. Sandra Whiteley's office of optometry.

Halsted began platting the town of Lowell in 1852. The final plat, dated May 13, 1853, showed 16 equal-sized lots which were given to the employees of his mill.

Community interest and village life soon commenced. Halsted named his new village Lowell, because its milling industries resembled the New England town of Lowell, Mass.

Again influenced by the spirit of adventure, Halsted sold his property in Lowell in 1857 and moved to Kimmunity, a small village in southern Illinois just south of Effingham.

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Melvin A. Halsted's home as it appeared in 1952 during the town's Centennial celebration.



Now owned by the Three Creeks Historical Association, today our town founder's home is a museum.

# Halsted brought prosperity to town

## MELVIN A. HALSTED

- \*1821 - Halsted born in New York State.**
- \*1844 - Visited Lake County, Indiana for the first time.**
- \*1845 - Moved to the West Creek area of Lake County to farm for three years.**
- \*1848 - Moved to a deserted cabin near the old train depot.**
- \*1849 - Purchased mill site, built kiln and made bricks for his new home.**
- \*1850 - Moved into new brick home. Left to join the California gold rush.**
- \*1852 - Returned to Lowell with a small fortune. Began planning town.**
- \*1853 - Built small brick schoolhouse.**
- \*1857 - Constructed Baptist church.**
- \*1868 - Built a second mill and helped establish a stage coach route.**
- \*1874 - Began work on bringing rail service to Lowell.**
- \*1915 - Died at the age of nearly 94 years.**

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

He constructed a grist mill and a saw mill in Kinmundy, remaining in business for the next two years.

Halsted headed west again in 1859, traveling to California where he built another flour mill just south of San Francisco.

He sold the mill for \$12,000 in 1861 and returned to Illinois. But Halsted was only back four months before he returned to the west.

Settling down in the San Francisco area once again, he mined at Gold Hill for three years and constructed four houses for rental purposes.

Halsted made another small fortune, returning to Lowell in January 1864. Finding his original property for sale, he purchased it, along with the McCarthy Mill located three miles away in Pleasant Grove, now known as Lake Dalecarlia.

He remodeled the mills and put them in excellent working order, remaining in the flour business until 1869, when he sold them and returned to California for the fourth time.

At the close of the Civil War in 1865, Halsted traveled to Mississippi to raise cotton. While this venture proved a failure, he traveled to the south to investigate the lumber business.

During this time, he visited Washington, D.C., where he obtained the assistance of Vice President Schuyler Colfax in getting a stagecoach route

between neighboring Crown Point and Lowell. The stagecoach carried both passengers and mail each day, with an average travel time of two hours each way because of the primitive road conditions.

After selling his mills, Halsted settled in Valejo, Cal., near San Francisco, where he built 14 houses which were rented out. He sold the homes in 1872.

The same year he took part in a hunting expedition off the island of Santa Barbara. Halsted captured four sea lions while on the expedition which he sold to showman John Robinson for \$1,200.

Later in 1872, he returned to his home in Lowell, where he supervised the building of a two-story brick schoolhouse at the corner of Main and Union streets. The same land was used in 1896 for the construction of a larger school which still stands today.

Halsted's next trip took him to the Utah Territory, where he worked as superintendent of a silver mine until 1873.

When he returned to Lowell, Halsted took a special interest in securing a railroad for the area. He worked hard for this cause and mainly because of his influence, a 2 percent tax was adopted to bring rail service to town.

The railway was opened through Lowell in 1880 by the Louisville, New Albany and Chicago Co. Most of the grading had been done in 1874,

however — six years before the rail service began — by a stock company organized by Halsted.

There was some freight and passenger business during the first year, but regularly scheduled trains did not run until 1881. Halsted's work was valued at \$85,000, but he was only paid \$65,000 for his efforts.

He was nonetheless proclaimed the "railroad king" of his day.

Halsted spent many years in the real estate business in Lowell, starting numerous additions to his hometown.

But he still dreamed of new horizons.

Halsted's wife, Martha, died in 1899.

In 1906, at the age of 85, Halsted traveled with his grandson, Clifford Halsted, to Harrison, Neb., where he again became a pioneer, homesteading 320 acres. He later sold his holdings there.

The same year, he married Mrs. Palmer Cross, the mother of the Rev. Ellis Cross.

His second wife died in 1911.

In 1913, at the age of 92, Halsted made his seventh trip west, traveling alone to California once again.

Halsted died on March 26, 1915, at the home of his son, William, in Auburn, Kan., just a few days before his 94th birthday.

A charter member of the Masonic Lodge, members of the lodge met the train bearing his remains. He was buried in the West Creek Cemetery.



# How Lowell's rail service was born

All through the years after he platted the first lots in town and built the first grist mill, Melvin A. Halsted's interest in the community never waned.

Both the grist mill and the railroad were important factors in the development of Lowell.

The town's first rail line had its beginning in 1847, when it stretched 35 miles between Salem and New Albany. In 1851, another line was started and was completed to Michigan City in 1854.

In about 1869, the Indianapolis, Delphi and Chicago Railroad Co. was formed, and plans were made to construct a line north to Chicago. A preliminary survey of the route alone took almost four years to complete.

In 1873, Halsted stopped in Chicago on his way to Utah and met with the officers of the railroad building company. Impressed with his enthusiasm, Halsted received a letter the same spring informing him construction would soon begin.

Halsted left his \$6-a-day position and went to Chicago, where he entered into a contract to construct a section of the railroad grading in the Lake County area.

When he returned to Lowell, he became one of the busiest men in the country.

Halsted invested about \$20,000 of his own money, encouraged other investors and obtained the right-of-way for the proposed line, as well as helping select and survey the route.

Some promoters in the Crown Point area attempted to convince the builders to go through their community in a line almost straight north from Shelby, but Halsted used his salesmanship and his wealth to persuade them to curve the line in the Kankakee Valley and then head northwest to Lowell — running just a block from the home in which he resided in 1850.

A vote was taken on a tax to be imposed on the residents of Cedar Creek Township and West Creek Township to bring the rail service to the area. And although there was much opposition to the tax, there were enough votes to get the tax passed.

Halsted and his construction crew were hard at work on the grading by the middle of August 1874. By the end



Martha Wilder, in foreground, and her husband, Fred, at far right, are shown at the original Monon Depot in Lowell in the 1890s. The Wilders often visited their daughter, Mrs. John Schneider, at the Cumberland Lodge north of Schneider.

of 1875, most of the work was completed in the area and the route was ready for the laying of ties and track.

In 1877, the Ohio firm of Yeoman, Hegler and Co. began to lay a narrow gauge track. After 40 miles of this smaller track was built, trains began running between Delphi and Rensselaer.

The line was then sold to Henry Crawford, who changed the name to the Indianapolis, Delphi and Chicago Air Line.

The name was again changed several more times through the years, but the most familiar tag in this area was the Monon route.

Crawford and his company finally completed the laying of the wider rails and the first mail train appeared at the Lowell depot in April 1881.

It cost Halsted \$85,000 for the grading and construction of the bridges, but he only initially received \$65,000, forcing him to sue for the balance.

Over the next 25 years, he filed suit

against the rail company several times, winning all of the judgements. But the company continued to appeal, offering to pay 50 percent of the amount due to him, which was declined by Halsted.

The final suit went against him and the money was lost, including that which had been owed to some of Halsted's friends.

Throughout the construction of the rail line, many well-meaning residents repeatedly told Halsted he would never be able to finish the road, that it was just too much to expect of anyone.

Many of them put obstacles in his way. When he condemned farms, the appraisers would set the price two to three times higher than what he paid for the adjoining acreage.

Some of the very men who benefited greatly from the arrival of the railroad voted against the tax, hoping to defeat the enterprise.

But all of the schemes failed to dull Halsted's energy.

He also encountered many problems while obtaining the right-of-ways for the rail line.

In many places, facilities had to be constructed to allow cattle and machinery to move from the barn to the fields. One of the well-known landmarks just north of Lowell was the large wooden viaduct over a deep cut in a hill.

Perhaps Halsted said it best in 1904 when he reflected on the opposition he faced to bringing the railroad to Lowell.

"When you stop to think of the vast benefit the Monon Railroad is to the people of our community today, it seems strange that there should have been anyone who would have opposed the enterprise," Halsted said. "I realized what it meant for our community, and I am glad it is here."

Evidently, many business owners agreed. Soon after its arrival, it began serving mills, lumber yards, coal yards, an implement shop, bulk oil plant, factory and a stockyard.



# Mill was erected next to railroad

While the railroad was being constructed in 1880 and 1881, an important commercial building was also erected near the rail right-of-way.

The DuBreuil-Keilman Elevator and Planning Mill came into existence during those years.

Located on the west side of the Monon Railroad tracks across from the Lowell Depot, the original building was 32-by-60 feet in size and 70 feet in height. It had a capacity of 60,000 bushels. The large smokestack was a clue to its steampowered system.

Leonard Keilman, a Dyer businessman, was a partner for many years in the DeBreuil-Keilman Co., and later with John Kimmet.

Kimmet was the early bookkeeper at the elevator. He came to Dyer in 1878, where he was principal of the high school for two years before joining the milling firm and moved to Lowell.

In 1880, Kimmet married Maggie Keilman, the daughter of Leonard Keilman. When Keilman's partner, John DuBreuil, died in 1892, Kimmet purchased the half interest and became a partner in the firm. The company name was then changed to Keilman-Kimmet.



**The Keilman-Kimmet Flour Mill, located across the railroad tracks from the Lowell Depot, was constructed in 1880 while the rails were being laid in Lowell. The mill, shown in this 1906 photograph, was demolished in 1927 following a legal condemnation.**

Kimmet also became vice president of the State National Bank of Lowell, and was a director of the First National Bank of Dyer.

In 1897, Kimmet was active in the building of the second St. Edward Catholic Church building on Castle Street.

He was also treasurer of the Three Creeks Monument Association, an organization formed to erect the war memorial located on the town's public square. The monument was dedicated in 1905 Edward Wood, who

learned the milling trade from his family and moved to Lowell to work for DuBreuil-Keilman in 1889 when a grist mill was added.

The mill had a capacity of 75 barrels of flour per day.

In 1902, a large lumber shed was added at the Keilman-Kimmet firm, which then sold grain, tile, brick, cement, lumber, glass, paints and all kinds of building materials.

Shipments were made to Chicago, Chicago Heights, Frankfort, Madison and many other points.

A 1909 advertisement in a local publication listed Leonard Keilman as president of the Keilman-Kimmet Flour Mill and J.L. Keilman as vice president.

John A. Kimmet was listed as the secretary, treasurer and manager of the firm.

By the 1920s, the abandoned mill buildings had been condemned and posed a dangerous playground for inquisitive youngsters.

The old mill was finally torn down in 1927.

## Depot post attracted local notables

For several decades, the familiar face of Frank Maloy could be seen at the desk of the station agent at the Lowell Depot.

A 44-year employee of the Monon Railroad, Maloy came to Lowell in 1903.

Maloy had great interest in his community, serving as justice of the peace as well as a semi-pro football coach.

Maloy's successor was William "Bill" Dooley, an old-timer on the Monon and well-known the length of the Hoosier Line.

Joe Cassady followed Dooley and was the station agent up to the time of the midnight train wreck in 1952 which destroyed the original depot.

The new brick building was dedicated in 1953 and still stands today.

Jim Lyons filled in for about two years as station agent before Don Cripe tookover the post.

Cripe, now a successful Lowell businessman, served as the agent at the Lowell Depot from 1954 to 1971 and witnessed many changes in the railroad business.

Ivan Booher was the last agent in Lowell and also traveled to several

other depots in Lake County on a daily basis.

On Sept. 30, 1967, a crowd of about 300 townsfolk were on hand to bid farewell to the Monon's last passenger train.

The Lowell High School Band played and sirens sounded as the 1 p.m. train pulled into the depot for the very last time.







Town residents get their first look at the wreckage of the fiery Monon Railroad crash which rocked Lowell during the early morning hours on May 22, 1952. Some 30 of the middle cars in the 68-car freight train jumped the tracks and piled up in the center of the Commercial Avenue crossing, leveling the rail line's original depot in the process.

# Train crash rocks town

## *Broken wheel causes 30-car derailment, huge blaze*

One of the worst wrecks in the history of the Monon Railroad occurred right here in Lowell on May 22, 1952.

The quiet community of 1,600 residents was awakened around 1:15 a.m. by flames shooting 75 feet in the air from exploding alcohol tank cars and ignited alcohol which trickled down the street to the Cedar Creek Bridge.

A broken wheel on a box car sparked the derailment of 30 of the middle cars in the 68-car freight train.

The train, bound from Chicago to Louisville, was being pulled by two diesel locomotives. They, along with the 15 front cars, remained on the rails.

All crew members were able to jump to safety before the alcohol caught fire.

The depot, which was to have been remodeled in time for the centennial celebration in August, was completely demolished after being struck by the telescoping rail cars. The remains burned to ashes after flaming alcohol spewed over the wreckage.

The scene was one of devastation, with more than 500 feet of track uprooted, downed power and telephone lines and the mangled wreckage of burned freight cars.

Railroad officials estimated the



**Alcohol tank cars burst into flames immediately after impact, putting the town's downtown business district in jeopardy as several small explosions rocked the area.**

damage at more than \$250,000.

Twenty-eight of the 30 cars that were tipped over in the crash were loaded with alcohol, meat, syrup and steel. The other two cars were empty.

The mixture of alcohol and molasses flowed into a nearby sewer and

exploded — blowing a manhole cover more than 100 feet into the air. Luckily, the heavy cover landed in a backyard where no onlookers were standing.

Refrigerator cars caught in the wreckage were smashed open on impact, dumping large quantities of

meat onto the pavement. Witnesses said some bystanders made a dash for the free meat, walking away from the crash scene with their arms loaded with steaks.

The wreckage extended for more than 800 feet along the tracks.



# Firemen prevent big loss

Firefighters from Lowell and seven surrounding communities helped keep loss to a minimum during the huge Monon Railroad crash of 1952.

Departments from Crown Point, Cedar Lake, Lake Dalecarlia, Schneider, Shelby, St. John and Gary joined the Lowell Volunteer Fire Department at the crash scene, fighting the raging flames from shortly after the 1:15 a.m. crash until late into the day.

An estimated 150 firemen fought the blaze for more than four hours before bringing it under control.

Small scattered fires erupted throughout the morning.

When the two Lowell fire trucks arrived on the scene, the entire street from the tracks to the bridge was ablaze with burning alcohol thrown several hundred feet by the exploding tanks.

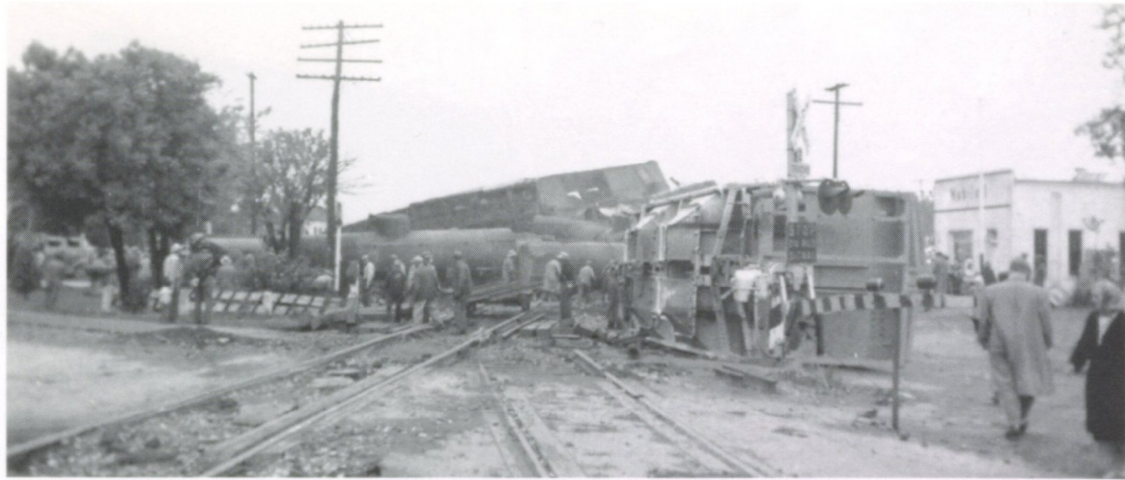
Firemen washed the alcohol down into nearby sewer traps and several explosions resulted from its mixture with sewer gases.

Had it not been for the combined efforts of the departments, the two gas stations located just a few feet west of the tracks and many other nearby buildings would also have been destroyed.

There were no injuries as a result of the derailment.

Had the accident occurred during daylight hours, a number of people would probably have been injured or killed because of the location of the crossing. Not only are the tracks situated adjacent to State Road 2, a busy state highway, but Commercial Avenue, as it is locally known, is the town's main thoroughfare.

There was also an initial fear that the nearby downtown business district would be engulfed in flames as well, but the hard-working firefighters prevented more serious and costly damage by standing watch well into the evening hours.



**A broken wheel on a box car caused the derailment of 30 of the middle cars of a 68-car freight train on May 22, 1952. The Commercial Avenue crossing was completely blocked in the mishap and crews spent the next several days removing the wreckage from the crash scene.**



**Monon Railroad crews survey the damage just hours after a train derailment in the center of town. Freight cars were stacked up four high in some places and flames from the exploding alcohol tank cars shot 75 feet in the air.**



**Washington Street was turned into a huge parking lot as many of the town's 1,600 residents and newspaper reporters and photographers from as far away as Chicago crowded the area to get a glimpse of the train crash scene.**





## ***Derailment left path of wreckage***





# Industry helped spur county growth

Through the years, many of the industries in the Three Creeks area were very important to the growth and development of southern Lake County.

While some were rather short-lived, early saw mills enabled the settlers to build better homes and buildings for industry.

Here is a chronological look at some of the important milestones.

**1837:** A saw mill was erected in the east bank of Cedar Creek in the sprawling community of Egypt, located about two miles south of the present Lowell town limits. Operated by Israel Taylor, it washed away after a few years but was rebuilt in 1844 with an attachment for grinding wheat.

**1847:** By this time, there were at least five saw mills in operation in southern Lake County, including one operated by pioneer Benjamin McCarty at the old village of Pleasant Grove, now a part of Lake Dalecarlia. It was known as the Carsten Mill by 1854 and at one time was operated by Lowell founder Melvin Halsted. The buildings had been leveled by 1900.

**1848:** Andrew Ault was busy building a dam and saw mill in 1845, but died before the project was completed. Halsted took over the task and completed the saw mill. It was located just south of Main Street at the banks of Cedar Creek.

**1853:** Halsted constructed a grist mill from the saw mill on Mill Street at Jefferson Street, now the site of the former Palo Theater building. The mill was powered by the dam on Main Street. The building was moved in 1879 and used as a barn at an unknown location.

**1859:** Perry Clark, son of local pioneer Jabez Clark, was the owner of a brick factory on Main Street near its intersection with Liberty Street. Near the three-story brick factory were three domed kilns used to bake the brick and tile. Bricks made here were used for many of the original sidewalks in Lowell.

**1868:** A large, three-story building was built on Main Street near the creek for a woolen mill by Halsted, Lapin and Co. Machinery from the 1853 mill was moved to this building, but only a small business was actually done in the woolen industry.



**Milk was shipped by rail from the Cedar Valley Creamery in Lowell to Chicago. The Monon milk train is shown in 1886.**



**The property which today is the site of Beier Engine and Machine, operating out of the former Palo Theater building at 133 Mill St., was once the location of a grist mill constructed by Melvin Halsted.**

Within a few years, it was the home of the Home Manufacturing Co., where farm wagons, cultivators, harrows and other implements were made. This business also failed within a short amount of time, and by 1882, the big building was again a grist mill. The building was destroyed by fire in the early 1900s.

**1878:** A cheese factory was built in the community of Orchard Grove, located east of Lowell, by Warren Carter and Co. of Chicago. Although it opened in June, by October it was operating in the red. It was then purchased by G.W. Handley and Jeremiah

Kenney, who were successful for many years, operating on a seven or eight month per year schedule.

**1882:** H. Dickinson was the owner of a factory on the east side of Lowell where several household items were made, including the Chicago Water Elevator and Purifier — a pump-like machine with a crank that operated gears above and below, where a double chain with small buckets were attached.

**1890:** A frame creamery building was built in downtown Lowell to make butter and ice cream, as well as to ship milk to Chicago on the Monon

Railroad. It was replaced in 1915 by a two-story masonry building. It was later used as a pickup station for larger dairies to the north, among them, the Borden Co. of Hammond.

**1905:** Martin Schur opened an undertaking business and furniture store. It was later bought by William Sheets and has remained in the Sheets family. The furniture store is no longer in business, however.

**1915:** John Miller, first a local blacksmith, opened a Ford dealership at the corner of Commercial Avenue and Parkview Street. The featured model was the Lowell truck, a sturdy-looking vehicle with hard rubber tires. The same vehicle was built in Gary, where it was called the Gary truck.

**1920:** The Lowell Reduction Co., founded by Carl Kenney Sr., was built to make farm fertilizer. Located in a field north of State Route 2 just north of the present Indian Trail Grange Hall, it was forced out of business during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

**1920:** The Dearborn Manufacturing Co. was housed in a long frame building near the creek on Main Street. With main offices in Chicago, brushes were made at the Lowell plant similar to those sold by the well known Fuller Brush Co.

Among the other industries through the years were the Lowell Electric Co., which served the town from a building where the old Lowell Water Plant now sits, and the Lowell Road Plane Co., which was located near the present site of Reiter Automotive North America Inc.

Thomas Arnott made furniture in the downtown area, Paul E. Ellis made cigars on Castle Street and the McNeely and Beckman Tile Factory was located downtown near the railroad tracks.

In later years, meat hooks were made at a small plant at Creston.

These industries, and untold numbers of others, played an important part in the formation and growth of southern Lake County.

With the completion of Interstate 65 in the late 1960s, Lowell, along with many of its south Lake County neighbors, became even more attractive to industry.

Today, several larger industries are aiding the area's economy.





Longtime residents will tell you Hardings Inc. has been around forever. And they're not too far off. The firm has been a part of the town's business community since 1923. The Commercial Avenue landmark is shown in a 1952 photograph.



Although several additions have been added to the building through the years, the Hardings building appears almost untouched by time. The firm moved into its present location in 1939, which is shown in this 2001 photograph.

## Hardings has withstood test of time

William Singler, one of the town's earliest businessmen, lived in a home surrounded by large oak and pine trees at the corner of Commercial Avenue and what was previously known as Globe Drive.

Among those trees was a mighty oak which stood near the corner. It was called a "witness tree," and was used as a landmark by surveyors in earlier times.

Through the years, several other families would reside in the former Singler family home. But in 1938, the site was cleared to make way for the new home of Hardings Inc.

Emil Harding, one of Lowell's best known businessmen, founded the firm in 1923, operating his implement store on Mill Street at the site of the early Lowell Fire Station.

Selling machinery was nothing new

to him, for Harding sold his first tractor from the farm in 1916, when an All Work-brand tractor was purchased from him on Labor Day by Floyd McKinstry of Grant Park, Ill.

Harding continued to sell that brand exclusively until 1928, when he became a John Deere dealer. The firm changed to Caterpillar tractor sales in 1935, staying with that company until 1960.

In 1936, when the firm needed more room for expansion, the decision was made to add a second floor to its Mill Street location. Contractor Carl Mahler was hired to raise the roof for the addition.

But in 1938, more space was again needed and plans were drawn for a new building.

Harding moved his business to temporary quarters in the old Main Garage building on Commercial Avenue

near its intersection with Mill Street.

The firm's former location on Mill Street was rented to John Stambaugh of Valparaiso, who continued to operate an implement dealership there.

The new Harding building on Commercial Avenue was almost completed in 1939, and in 1940, the Mill Street building was sold to Murrell Belanger, who also operated an implement store.

Belanger's hobby would later garner him some notoriety when Lee Wallard wheeled the Belanger Special — built on the second floor of the Mill Street shop — to victory in the 1951 Indianapolis 500.

Harding's new building was completed in 1939. On Feb. 5, 1940, Emil Harding greeted hundreds of farmers and their families at an open house to celebrate the grand opening of the

new building. Exhibits and interesting movies were also a part of the big open house.

Several additions have been made through the years, including a shop area to the rear of the building in 1955.

In 1975, more expansion was necessary and a large addition was made west of the original structure. This annex is used for parts storage and as a shipping area.

A track and paint building was added to the complex in 1978 and the old display area in the front of the building was remodeled into a modern office area in 1986.

Following the untimely death of Clarence Harding Sr. in 1999, Globe Drive was renamed Harding Drive by the Lowell Town Council in recognition of his many contributions to the community.

## Love family had passion for hay business

Although it's now been gone for many years now, the Love Hay Company was once a very busy enterprise in the town's west side business district.

A small office building was located near the railroad tracks on the north side of Commercial Avenue, with a wagon scale just to the rear of the property and a large red barn along Washington Street.

Samuel Love, an Irish immigrant, moved to Winfield Township in 1876 where he operated a hay business with

his two sons, John and William. The elder Love also operated a general store in Leroy and served as its postmaster.

The eldest son, John, came to Lowell in 1893 and was in the hay business by himself until 1900, when he went into partnership with A.S. Hull.

Their hay barn was situated near the Cedar Creek Bridge on Main Street.

John Love would later become a cashier of the State national Bank of Lowell in 1903 but retained special

interests in the fields of farming and Samuel Love's second born son, William Love, who married Lovisa Surprice in 1886, also moved to Lowell.

The couple purchased property that was part of the land owned by early Lowell businessman John W. Viant, including the site of the present Lake Tire Co. just west of the railroad tracks on Commercial.

William Love operated a hay business near his home on Commercial Avenue.

His large red barn was a landmark

along Washington Street near the railroad tracks. It was torn down around 1940. The small frame office building was torn down in the early 1930s.

John Jones, an assistant to William Love, also lived there.

Love died in 1929, and in 1931 his widow married Jones and carried on the hay business.

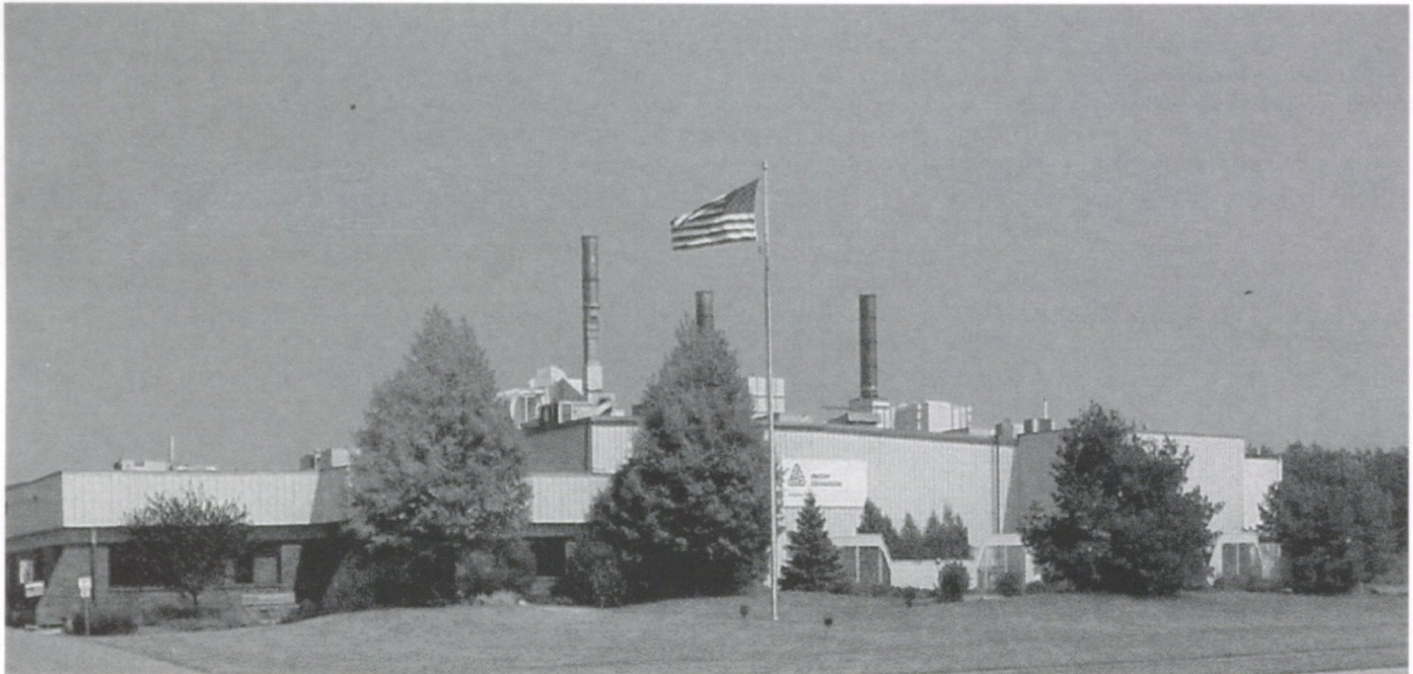
Jones also owned a stockyard near the present site of Rieter Automotive North America Inc. and shipped livestock to Chicago by rail.

He died in 1946.





270 Westmeadow Place Lowell, IN 46356



The 16,000 square foot QMS facility was constructed in October 1980 by White Advertising Company. In 1986, Avery purchased this facility. In 1987, another production line was installed, which resulted in a building and warehouse expansion. In 1995, we expanded once again, adding a finishing warehouse. In 2002, approximately 80 Avery Dennison employees manufacture durable cast vinyl pressure sensitive film used in graphic applications. The current facility has grown to a 100,000 square foot building on a 7 acre site.



# Lowell Tribune began its coverage in 1885

The Lowell Tribune, our local community newspaper, has been loyally serving the town for the past 116 years.

The newspaper was founded in 1885 by Yates C. Vosburg, but just a few months after its start, H.H. Ragon and his partner, A.A. Winslow, purchased the business from Horace Beebe.

The paper was printed out of town for some time until Winslow's share in the business was purchased in 1890 by Ragon's eldest son, Elmer, and the printing was brought home to Lowell.

Later, the elder Ragon's second son, Leonard, took his brother's place as a partner with his father.

In 1912, Cordie and Len Ragon bought out their father's interests and were partners in the business until 1941, when Len sold his portion of the newspaper to Charles Surprise.

Ironically, Surprise was the grandson of H.H. Ragon.

In the early days, type was set by the light of kerosene wall lamps and the paper was printed on a lever-operated Foster printer, typical of the Ben Franklin model.

Then came the Vaughn Ideal, a small cylinder hand-operated printer, with Cordie Ragon as the "printer's devil," or apprentice.

Gasoline-powered machinery came into use and The Lowell Tribune was quick to realize its value with the purchase of a Country Campbell printer. When electric lines were run to Lowell around 1900, the Ragons purchased a drum cylinder Babcock printing press.

It remained in use until the 1950s, when a new automatic Miehle printer was purchased.

In 1922, typesetting was speeded up with the purchase of a linotype machine, and soon a second was installed along with more modern equipment to increase the company's commercial printing business.

Myrtle Ragon Buckley, H.H. Ragon's daughter, was the first linotype operator.

Charles Surprise became the sole owner of The Lowell Tribune late in 1948 when Cordie Ragon retired.

In 1950, the newspaper acquired a 26-by-70-foot building from the Wood estate that was attached to the

south wall of the printing plant.

After extensive remodeling, the work area was doubled. The addition had been Lowell's first garage, constructed in 1908 by Merriman Castle.

In 1961, The Lowell Tribune was purchased by Lyle H. Pilcher, who began his career in radio and moved into the newspaper business in his native Illinois.

Pilcher was the publisher of the Woodstock Daily Sentinel in Woodstock, Ill., before purchasing the town's weekly newspaper.

The same year, Pilcher moved to Lowell with his wife, Mary Jeanette, and the couple's three children, Gary, Jan and Craig.

During the 1960s, the Pilcher Publishing Co. established the Cedar Lake Journal and the Southlake Advertiser to cover the market areas both north and south of Lowell with a weekly publication.

In 1978, Pilcher purchased The Northern Star, a weekly newspaper serving Lake Village in nearby southern Newton County.

Perhaps the biggest and most expensive innovation by the Pilcher firm came in 1967, when its printing process was converted from letter press to offset. Pilcher became one of very few publishers of its size to own its own offset press.

This conversion involved the purchase of an adjacent residence and a lot north of the offices, along with the construction of a new attached building.

The new Goss offset press offered color capabilities and improved speed and quality.

New offset equipment was purchased for the pressroom and composing room, and the office complex was remodeled.

Later, another addition was made to the growing business for newsprint storage and other supplies.

In 1987, the former Indiana Bell Telephone Co. switching station located immediately south of the newspaper plant was purchased to accommodate expansion of the business.

Following Lyle Pilcher's death in 1997, his wife became the publisher of the Pilcher Publishing Co.

All three of their children are cur-



S. Propp, left, Elmer Ragon, Len W. Ragon, John Shurte and Owen Peterson pose in front of the original office of The Lowell Tribune in 1895. The town's weekly community newspaper, which has been in business since 1885, was first located on the south side of Commercial Avenue next to the Lowell National Bank.

## Lowell Star was town's first newspaper

Community newspapers have been very valuable to the residents of south Lake County for many decades, serving both the business and social needs of the area.

The first newspaper published in Lowell was the Lowell Star, a weekly which was produced from May 1872 until May 26, 1877.

The editor Edward R. Beebe then moved his business to Crown Point, where he entered into a partnership with C.W. Ainsworth. Their enterprise, the Lake County Star, was sold to John J. Wheeler in 1880.

Another early newspaper which chronicled life in Lowell was the Lowell Enterprise.

Edited by Rae and Hewgill in the 1870s, some of the last editorials printed in the publication bore the name of Robert Rae Jr.

Ironically, the Lake County Star, now owned by Holinger International Inc., began publishing the Cedar Lake-Lowell Star, a weekly community newspaper, in 1998.

rently working in the family business. Gary is the advertising manager and Jan works part-time at the newspaper and compiles the popular "By Gone Years" column.

Craig serves as production manager and his wife, Christine, is an account executive in the Advertising Department. Their son, Matthew, works in

the Production Department.

In October 2001, the company celebrated its 40th anniversary as publishers of The Lowell Tribune.

The front page of the Oct. 9, 2001 edition of the newspaper included a thank you to the community for its continued support of the weekly hometown newspaper.



# Small tabloid devoted to high brow interests

It was no National Enquirer, but Lowell had its own tabloid newspaper in the early 1900s.

The Lowell Souvenir, a small 8-page newspaper, was published each Saturday.

The front page of the publication boldly proclaimed: "A Weekly Journal devoted to High Class Literature and the Interests of Lowell and Lake County Indiana."

An annual subscription to the small tabloid was priced at \$1. In 1902, Ernest E. Woodcock was the publisher of the Souvenir.

Pursuing through the Jan. 18, 1902 edition, the big news in town was the planned construction of a soldiers and sailors monument on the town square.

Woodcock wrote in a front-page story that he had "the deepest sympathy for the gallant old soldiers."

During the month of January 1902, the publisher set aside 25 percent of every new subscription and 15 percent of all renewals for the benefit of the Monument Fund.

Another news item regarding the Monument Fund read: "There is some talk about a box social to be given by the high school for the benefit of the monument to be erected at Lowell for the soldiers and sailors. It is sure to be a success."

The monument was erected through donations collected from and by the residents of Lowell. It was dedicated in 1903.

A half-page advertisement for the Wilbur Lumber Co. featured rock wall plaster, telephone and cedar posts, crushed stone, sidewalk brick and ladders.

The ad boasted "well assorted and of superior quality stock at prices that

compete with Chicago."

Managed by F.W. Buckley in 1902, the large lumber company was located on Washington Street across the street from Costas Foods where a parking lot is now located.

On the other half of the page was an ad for the Studebaker Gentleman's Driving Wagon.

More commonly known as a horse-drawn carriage, the ad was sponsored by Emil Sirois. To contact him, all you had to do was, "phone 824, Lowell, Ind."

The Lowell Opera House was the scene of great drama at the time. "In Mizzoura" was being presented there by the Crown Point Dramatic Club.

The Opera House was located on the second floor of a commercial building on the northeast corner of Commercial Avenue and Mill Street. The building was leveled by fire in 1976.

A large advertisement for the State National Bank, located at the corner of Wall Street and Commercial Avenue, offered this equal opportunity message: "Your banking? No matter how small, no matter how large, the State Bank of Lowell will give it careful attention. This message applies to the men and the women alike."

The former bank building now houses Nellie Jayne's, a cafe and antique shop.

One ad announced a one-day sale of gingham material for 5 cents per yard.

Another advertisement offered a trial subscription to the newspaper for 25 cents.

The Souvenir had a relatively short life, having been published for only a few years in the early part of the century.



In January 1902, a portion of every new subscription and renewal to the Lowell Souvenir was donated to the town's Monument Fund. The war monument is shown in 1912.



The Wilbur Lumber Co. boasted prices that were competitive with those offered in Chicago in its ad in the Lowell Souvenir. The lumber company, no longer a part of the town's business community, is shown in 1952.

# Saco brought national significance to town

Saco Industries Inc., established in 1977, became an important part of the community when it moved from Frankfort, Ill., to Lowell in 1993.

Located at 17151 Morse St., the original building which housed the firm was constructed as the new home

of Fry's Department Store following a 1976 fire which destroyed the former downtown landmark.

A major producer of kitchen and bathroom cabinets and counter tops, Saco is licensed and services some 47 states across the U.S.

Growth of the firm necessitated a 17,280 square foot addition to the original structure in 1996. This was followed by a 16,000 square foot addition in 1998.

A major \$2.4 million building project, which included a 64,320

square foot addition, was launched in 1999.

The renovation work continued in 2001 with another 51,200 square foot addition to the building valued at \$1.1 million and continued renovations to the remainder of the complex.





# Globe Industries had humble beginnings

*Rieter Automotive Systems adds a new chapter to Lowell's industrial success story*

It was right after World War I, around 1918, when the Gary Truck Co. erected a 100-foot building on property which bordered the Louisville-Nashville Railroad and Oakley Avenue.

On the west end of the brick building, carved in stone, were the words: "Atlas Axle Factory."

The prime purpose of the building was to manufacture axles for the Gary Truck Co., which was located in Gary.

Stock in the small company was sold to the residents of Lowell, who were eager to see industry come to their small community.

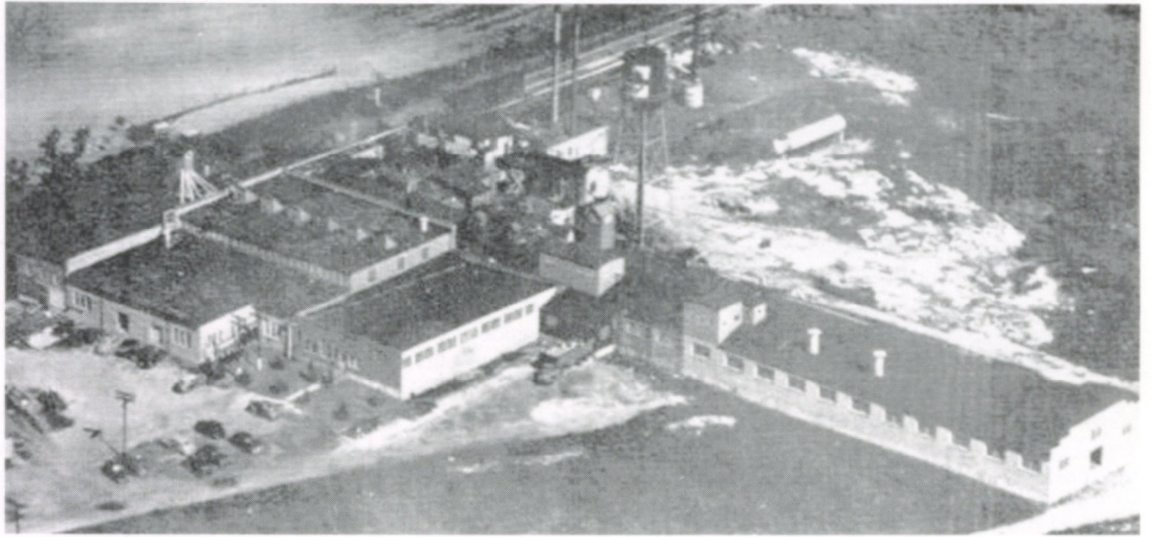
But the business never got off the ground and the building was never used. Unfortunately, the investors also lost all of their money.

A few years later, John Miller, a local blacksmith who operated his business out of the building we now know as Zuni's Restaurant and Lounge at the corner of West Commercial Avenue and Parkview Street, began producing the Lowell Truck.

Although the Atlas Axle Factory was utilized along with Miller's blacksmith shop for the construction of the special truck, this also failed to be a very productive industry as only two of the Lowell-brand trucks were sold.

Both trucks were sold to Lowell residents – one to William Sheets and the other to Philip McNay.

In the early 1920s, Edward



**Globe Siding Products, as it was known in 1952, has been a part of the town's industrial community since 1934.**

Schroeder purchased the building and leased it to the Stay-Rite Roofing Co.

Used machinery was purchased and the small firm began manufacturing rolled roofing. Stay-Rite went out of business in less than 10 years.

The now-idle plant was purchased again in 1933 and George Beckman, the first employee hired by the new owner, immediately went to work removing all the old machinery and purchasing new equipment from Grand Rapids, Mich.

The refurbished plant, known as the Globe Roofing Products Co., was in operation by 1934.

Charley Humble was the first plant manager, followed by Henry Cook, who later relocated to the Whiting plant.

Beckman, who served as plant manager for six years, was one of the industry's foremost master mechanics and machine builders. He was with Globe for 41 years prior to his retirement in 1974.

In 1944, the company's roofing operations were moved to the newly-purchased Whiting plant.

The Lowell plant, which had been known as Globe Roofing, was scheduled to begin manufacturing siding

and was closed for a year for retooling. Some of its employees went to work at the Whiting plant.

Henry Cook and George Beckman designed, built and installed all of the siding machinery.

A 200-foot addition was added to the west end of the original building to accommodate the new product line.

For a short time, the company operated under the name of Manufacturer's Specialtie, then Globe Siding Products, which it remained until 1958.

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# Siding business gives way to auto interests

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An automotive sound deadening line was installed in 1958 and the company became Globe Industries Inc. The siding operation faced some stiff competition from the aluminum siding industry during the 1960s and Globe dropped its siding products line in 1970.

Globe-manufactured siding was maintenance free and an inexpensive way to remodel a home. It came in 20 colors and was guaranteed for 20 years.

During its production, siding was shipped throughout the country and exported to West Germany.

Today, Globe's siding can still be found in many homes, garages, barns and sheds in Lowell.

The 1970s brought a continued

strong demand for both roofing and sound-treating materials.

The technology of the acoustics materials continued to evolve and improve. Recycled cotton fibers were becoming more prevalent because of their excellent absorbing qualities.

Slowly, roofing felts were being phased out and unlike Globe, gradually roofing companies stopped producing sound deadening materials.

The plant was purchased by International Bank of Washington, D.C., and plant capacity was expanded by 50 percent with the addition of a large warehousing and shipping facility.

During the 1980s, the automotive industry continued to become a worldwide affair as affordable cars were built in Europe and Japan.

Globe, which had earlier formed an

alliance with a leading producer of sound deadening equipment in Europe, now extended its hand to Japan and entered the Japanese market. Honda was the first to join forces with Globe.

Continued growth and several large manufacturing lines were added for additional plant capacity.

Globe also began supplying the appliance industry with sound deadening material for washing machines and dishwashers during the 1980s.

Ownership of the company again changed hands in 1986 when Kingdon Gould Jr. and Robert Christopher purchased Globe.

Although the 1990s, started off slow due to a decrease in new car sales, in 1995 Globe became part of the Rieter Textile Systems from Winterthur,

Switzerland.

The company was renamed Rieter Automotive Systems the same year.

The partnership has given the Lowell plant a worldwide presence in the automotive systems market with a total of 40 plants in the United States, Canada and several foreign countries.

In addition to Lowell, the North America group has plants in Oregon; Ohio; St. Joseph, Mich.; Tillisonburg, Ontario; Canada; Chicago; Chicago Heights, Ill.; Valparaiso and Aiken, S.C.

The South America group plants are located in Taubate, Brazil; Betim, Brazil; Sao Bernardo, Brazil; and Cardoba, Argentina.

The remaining Rieter plants are situated in Europe and Asia.

## Midwest moves family business to town

Midwest Accurate Grinding Service Inc., 17211 Morse St., was established 33 years ago on the premise that quality, accuracy and service are necessary factors to build a successful business foundation.

As a family-owned business, Midwest's founding work force was a father, son and friend who practiced the high craftsmanship ideals they believed in.

The original activities of the company centered around quality resharping of perishable cutting tools.

Midwest relocated from Illinois to Lowell in 1993, when it constructed a new energy-efficient facility in the town's industrial district.

An important part of this facility is the coolant recycling system which allows Midwest to capture all metal particles generated in grinding while filtering the coolant for reuse.

This system meets all Environmental Protection Agency requirements for protecting the environment while offering the company extended use of its coolants.

While the resharping of cutting tools remains a large part of the business today, a growing need for precision grinding of special tools and abrasive machining on component parts now takes the spotlight.

Today, under second generation



Midwest Accurate Grinding Service Inc. relocated its family owned and operated business from Illinois in 1993 when it constructed a new energy-efficient facility on Morse Street.

guidance and an expanded workforce, the same family pride and dedication to quality continues – but to an even higher degree.

Now, state-of-the-art computerized equipment and management information systems help to maintain the most exacting standards of excellence and precision.

With the continued acquisition of modern equipment, the company now

has the capability of grinding a wide variety of forms.

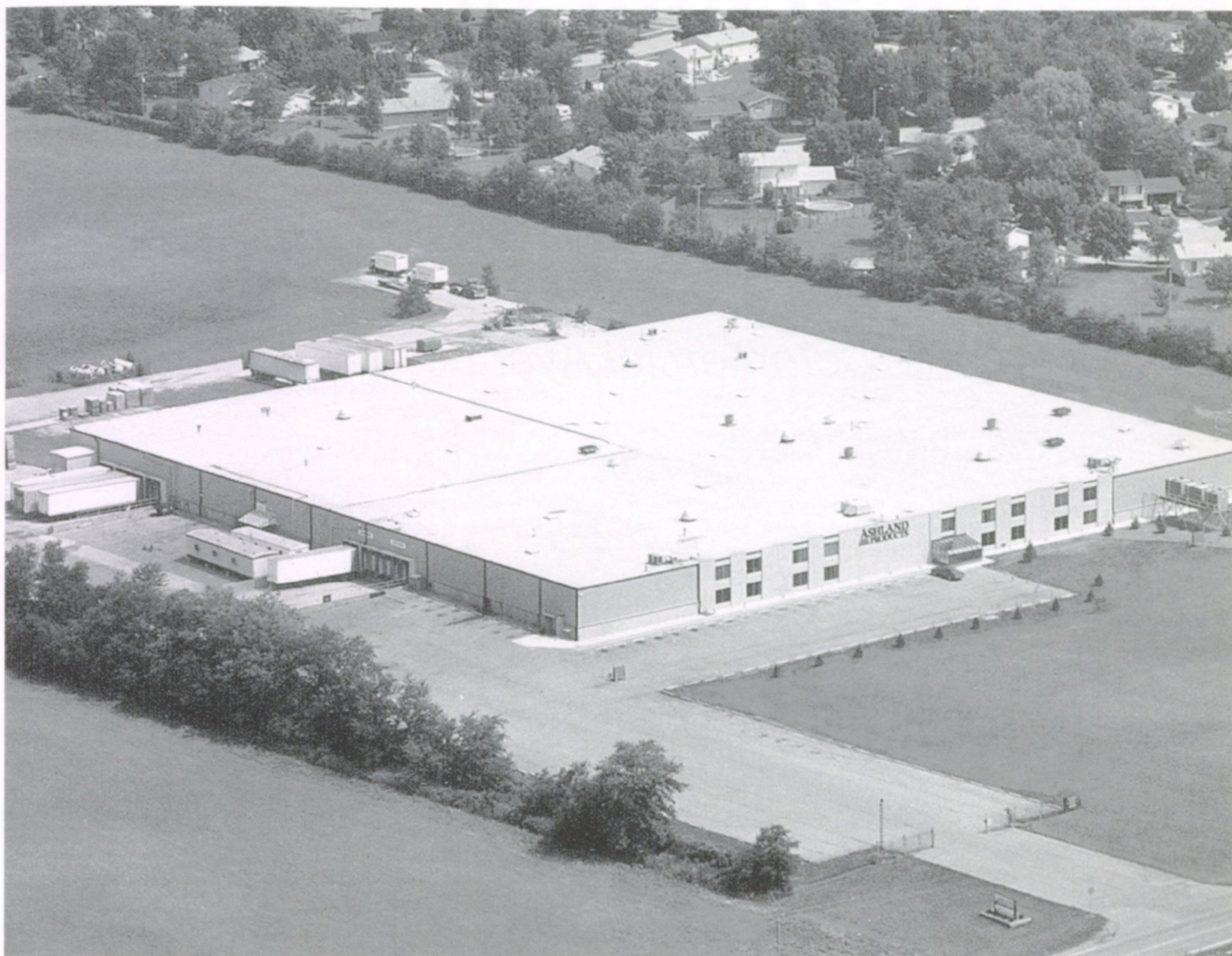
A "house specialty" of Midwest is the grinding of helical forms, or teeth on round bodies. Most often, the company's work is in materials too hard to turn or mill, thus the term, "abrasive machining."

The more common materials worked on by the firm are hardened tool steel and carbide, although ce-

ramic is also beginning to appear in the plant as customers push the limit of their products.

With additional property to accommodate any needed expansion, Midwest is prepared to face the industrial challenges of 2002 and beyond along with the promise that a third generation with the same high ideals will continue to maintain the firm's high standards of quality.





# Chicago company relocates to Lowell



Ashland Hardware Systems, a division of Newell Rubbermaid, is recognized as a leader in the window and door industry for design and production of complete window and door hardware. Originating from Chicago, Ashland relocated in 1994 into a 130,000 square foot facility in Lowell.

This state-of-the-art facility, situated on 23 acres, represents Ashland's commitment to providing a growing environment that safeguards our future. Ashland operates additional production facilities in Rockford, IL; Sioux Falls, SD and Toronto, Ontario, Canada.



# Historical tour of Downtown Lowell

*Visit door-to-door through the years as the town's business district evolves from the mill area to Commercial Avenue*

Many of Lowell's early pioneers worked hard to build the town and planned the original business district along what we now know as Main Street.

But only a few years after the first streets were laid out by founder Melvin Halsted in 1852, the county constructed a new road which is now Commercial Avenue. It was not a state road in the early days, although there was a state route to the south on what is now Belshaw Road.

Most of the early business owners moved their stores from the mill district on Main Street to the new location two blocks south. Soon, the busy street was lined with frame buildings and business was thriving in the little town.

Tragedy struck in 1889, however, when most of the frame buildings on the north side of Commercial Avenue were destroyed by fire. Stories circulated that the fire actually started in several different places at the same time, but that theory was never proven.

Soon after the fire, the wooden buildings were replaced with modern brick structures. On the south side of the business district, the old wooden buildings were slowly replaced by more fireproof ones. Today, hardly a trace can be found of the wooden structures.

Some of the oldest downtown buildings still standing on the south side of Lowell's downtown business district were built around 1890, and

all of them have been remodeled in some way over the years.

In 1880, at about the same time the railroad began coming through Lowell, a frame building was constructed near the banks of Cedar Creek on the site of what we now

were also sold out of the shop.

The John Hepp Tavern occupied the building for many years and the hotel rooms were rented out by the month. Hepp was a charter member of Lowell American Legion Post 101.

The building later housed the Kepshire Tavern, and in 1963, the structure, then owned by American Legion Post 101, was sold to a Crown Point firm and torn down.

The property was landscaped and a flagpole was moved from a site closer to the Legion building and placed in the center of the site.

The pole was originally dedicated to the memory of Edward M. Berg. A World War I veteran, Berg was the son of a west side blacksmith and a well-known Lowell

businessman. He was an early supporter of the local American Legion post and died in 1940 after several years as a state conservation officer.

In the early 1900s, a small business was constructed between the tavern and Cedar Creek. Located near the sidewalk on an incline, the rear of the building was supported by poles.

A shoe shop was located there for several years, and a rear room was used as a barber shop.

Wilfred R. Weaver was a barber there in the early 1920s, before becoming a well-known funeral director in Lowell.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24



**Some of the oldest downtown buildings remain in use today. These shoppers are pictured in front of a business circa 1900.**

know as Legion Park.

While the identity of the builder and the first business owner are not known, according to the town's earliest records, the building housed the Ceiga Hotel and Tavern. The hotel featured 12 second floor rooms and was a handy stop for weary rail travelers.

In 1909, the business was known as Pete's Place, a saloon and hotel operated by Peter Seramur. By 1913, meals, short orders and bakery goods were featured at the business now owned by Mrs. Peter Seramur and renamed The Seramur Restaurant.

Will J. Tanner was the next owner of the building and changed its use to a billiard parlor around 1916. Cigars, tobacco, candy and soft drinks





Tragedy struck on Oct. 4, 1898 when most of the frame buildings on the north side of Commercial Avenue were destroyed by fire.



The intersection of Commercial Avenue and Washington Street has significantly changed through the years.

The flagpole at Legion Park was originally dedicated to the memory of Edward M. Berg, a World War I veteran.



# Town's downtown district once boasted a creamery

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

The front room of the small building was occupied for many years by Herman Burnham, a real estate salesman and Cedar Creek township trustee.

A short distance away, a creamery building was constructed during the 1890s on the site of the present Legion building.

Dairy farmers brought milk to the plant in 10-gallon cans. The expensive cans were reused for many years, and were repaired at the local hardware store or blacksmith shop.

A new two-story masonry building

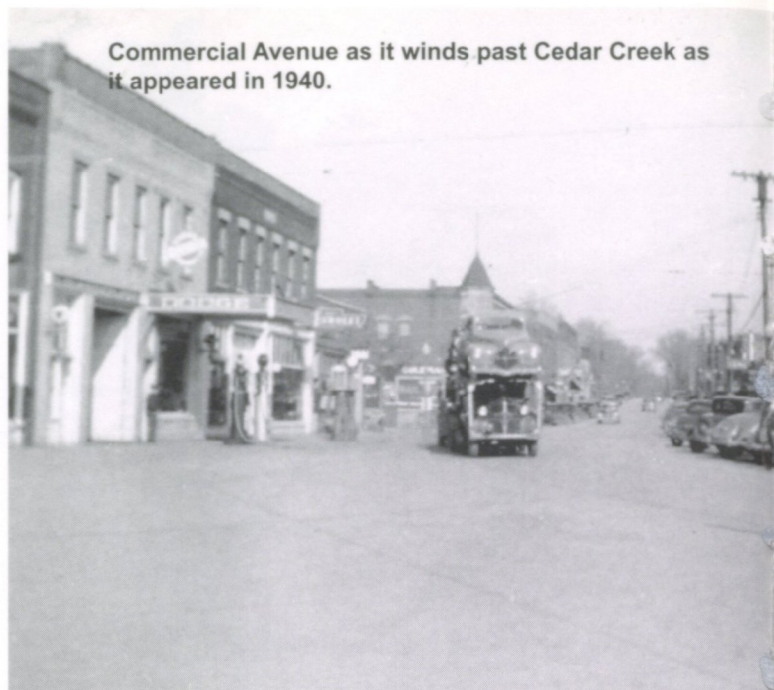
replaced the original frame structure around 1915 when new machinery was installed, including a Chandler and Taylor-Corliss engine to run the equipment to manufacture ice cream. The Cedar Valley Creamery advertised "Butter without a Fault."

In the 1920s, the plant became a pick-up station for larger dairies to the north.

The Milk Dealers Transportation Company was formed in 1923 by Charles J. Pear and Robert Cullen, and trucks were first used to transport the milk rather than the adjacent railroad.

The firm was purchased by Lloyd Fleming of Crown Point in 1945.

Commercial Avenue as it winds past Cedar Creek as it appeared in 1940.



This building, although once an AMTRAK depot, is not used as a maintenance building by the CSX Railroad.





The town's original train depot and the nearby gas station were leveled by the train wreck of 1952.



In 1941, the tree-lined Commercial Avenue was not the busy thoroughfare it would later become.



Erected in 1880, the building pictured at left housed a hotel, pool hall and tavern before being torn down in 1963d. It is shown in a photograph taken in the 1940s.



# Former creamery becomes Legion's permanent home

Although the Lowell American Legion Post 101 was organized on Sept. 18, 1919, it wasn't until 1937 that members found a permanent home for the post.

While the group had held its meetings in rooms above the downtown stores for nearly two decades, in 1937, Dr. Gerald Bardens, who served as post commander in 1931, used his own money to purchase the old creamery building for a post home.

He was later repaid by Post 101 for his investment.

Bardens, an early Legionnaire, served the Lowell community as a veterinarian for more than 50 years. He moved to Lowell from Hammond in 1918 after serving in the Veterinary Corps of the U.S. Army in World War I.

On Feb. 19, 1938, the remodeled creamery building was dedicated as the first permanent home of the group. A dance was held to commemorate the special event.

Ten years later, an addition was constructed at the site. It included an eight-lane bowling alley and an upstairs banquet hall.

Partially funded by the Fay Lynch Estate, the remodeling project was designed by architect Kenneth Vaughn and engineered by Hugh Rieke. The contractor for the job was William Tatman.

Loyal Alyea was the post commander at the time of the expansion project and Austin Cunningham was serving as adjutant.

Members of the building committee included George Hathaway, Harry Clark, James Combs and Robert Trump, all past commanders of Post 101.

In 2001, the building underwent a major facelift.

After having the building on the market for more than a year, the post's Executive Board launched the first phase of a number of planned improvements.

The three-story red brick exterior was changed to a crisp, white facade.

Despite the many changes over the years, even today, a section of the old creamery building can still be detected on the west side of the Legion building.

Meanwhile, as Lake County Surveyor George Van Til began work on plans for an extensive restoration and improvement project in the nearby Cedar Creek, the Lowell Town Council began talks with the American Legion to turn the unused property adjacent to the creek into a small park.

And through the joint efforts of the Lake County Surveyor's Office, Lake County Drainage Board, Lowell Town Council and Post 101, Legion Park was born.

Because the property is owned by the Legion, before the town could do any work on the new park, a lease had to be obtained from the veterans group.

While the organization was apprehensive about selling the land to the Town of Lowell, town officials and Post 101 negotiated a 99-year lease for the Legion Park property.

Providing an attractive anchor to the west end of the town's historic downtown business district, Legion Park features a winding concrete walkway which encircles the new Post 101 flag memorial.

Extensive landscaping, new lighting and decorative fencing along the banks of Cedar Creek were also included in the \$30,000 appropriated by the Town Council for the park project.

In addition, \$5,576 in recycling grant money the town received from the Lake County Solid Waste Management District was also used to purchase park benches, trash cans and a sign made from recycled materials for the new park.

Although the Lake County Surveyor's Office and the Lake County Drainage Board had originally allotted \$45,000 for the creek project, nearly \$100,000 was actually spent on the renovation.

County crews completely cleaned and snagged Cedar Creek in 2001 and erected terraced stone walls along the ditch banks to create an attractive look and help prevent erosion.

In time, ivy will cascade down the banks of the creek from the newly constructed stone walls.

Legion Park was formally dedicated in 2002.







The winding path through Legion Park provides a tranquil setting along the banks of Cedar Creek as it flows through the downtown business district.

Through a joint project between Lake County and the Town of Lowell, Cedar Creek was dredged in 2001 and its banks were beautified.



A section of the old creamery building can still be seen today on the west side of the Legion building.

Lowell American Legion Post 101 as it appeared prior to the major renovation project, which was launched in 2001.





The Main Garage building, shown in 1926, housed a Chevrolet and Buick dealership until the early 1930s, when the Felder brothers, Clifford and Arthur, moved the agency to the north side of Commercial Avenue.



In 1940, angle parking was allowed throughout the downtown business district, including along the bridge over Cedar Creek. Prior to the start of World War II in 1941, Main Garage was converted into a roller rink.



A part of the town's downtown business district since 1912, the building still known by many Lowell residents as the Main Garage is currently undergoing another extensive renovation.



# Buicks, Hudsons or Chevrolets, Main Garage was the place for cars

Although it may look quite different than it did when it was constructed around 1912, the building at 210 E. Commercial Ave. is still known to many Lowell residents as has the old Main Garage.

Early documents show the land was owned by the pioneer Brownell family. The original masonry building was constructed by George Hoevet and Bernard T. Beckman, both well-known town businessmen.

Local folklore tells us that just prior to its opening as Hoevet's Auto Agency a presidential rally was held at the garage following a torchlight parade down Commercial Avenue.

While the rally is believed to have taken place in 1912, prior to the election of Democrat Woodrow Wilson in 1913, it is doubtful that the rally was for Wilson, since Lowell was a Republican stronghold at the time.

One of the earliest new car dealerships at the location was a Buick garage operated by Merritt Hayden and his sons Clark and Milford.

In future years, Phelps Hull operated a Buick dealership at the site.

The Felder Brothers, Clifford and Arthur, were partners in a Chevrolet and Buick dealership which remained in operation from 1925 until the early

1930s, when the agency moved to the north side of the street.

The Felders had one of the few garages open 24 hours a day, with gasoline, service and a wrecker available.

A 1930 advertisement for the dealership found in the Lowell Tribune listed the cost of a Chevrolet Roadster at \$495, a coupe for \$565 and a sedan for \$625.

An additional \$71 charge was added for delivery to Lowell — but also paid for the spare tire and front and rear bumpers.

About the time the Felders moved from the location, James Brannock became the owner of the building.

Brannock was a well-known and respected contractor who built roads in Lake County for 25 years.

His son, Kenneth, opened an auto dealership at the location, selling

Oldsmobiles and Hudsons there until he too moved his firm to the north side of the street to another building owned by his father.

Kenneth Brannock became a partner of Charles Bowman, selling Oaklands, Pontiacs and Plymouths.

The northside location had previously been the location of a Ford dealership operated by Anda Maxwell and Frank Nelson.

For a few years just prior to the start of World War II in 1941, the garage on the south side

of the street was converted into a roller rink.

The Evans Company, operators of an open air rink in Cedar Lake, constructed the Crystal Roller Rink, which became a popular destination for the local youth.

Clarence Berdine, who a few years

earlier had purchased the Chevrolet dealership on the south side of Commercial Avenue from the Felder brothers, moved the business back to the south side of the street in 1943.

Berdine had the building for only a short time before a fire destroyed the front part of the structure, including a beauty shop on the east side of the building operated by Eleanor Buckley.

The building was again restored and Berdine moved to Florida, selling the Main Garage to Alvah Pletcher.

In 1944, prominent Lowell businessman Robert Cullen opened his Chevrolet dealership at the site.

The business was sold to Harrison Snell in 1958, just in time for the unveiling of the 1959 models.

As business grew, larger quarters were needed and Snell moved to a new building on the west side of town in 1965. The Pontiac emblem would later be added to the firm's marquee.

After Snell left the old building, it was again remodeled and became the offices of the Tri-Creek School Corp.

In 1974, the building was struck by a tornado, completely destroying the rear part of the structure.

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**In 1944 prominent businessman Robert H. Cullen opened a Chevrolet dealership at the site still known to many Lowell residents as the Main Garage.**



**Residents line Commercial Avenue for the annual Kiddie Parade during the 1972 Labor Day Celebration. Main Garage, which then housed the administrative offices of the Tri-Creek School Corp., is shown at right.**



# 1974 Tornado damages school offices

*Tri-Creek school board members and staff in building when tornado hit*

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

Members of the Tri-Creek School Board and administrative staff were in the building when the high winds hit, but luckily, no injuries were reported as a result of the tornado.

The school offices were later moved to a new building on Burr Street.

Remodeled one more time, the building has continued to house an assortment of business enterprises, including a Montgomery Ward catalog store, an antique shop, a record store and the Lowell Sports Gun Shop.

By a strange coincidence, one of the operators of the gun shop was a grandson of Arthur Felder, one of the partners in the auto business housed there in the 1920s and 1930s.

Most recently, the building housed TJ's South Pub and for a short time, the Live Wire Lounge.

Following a severe winter snowstorm in 1999, serious structural problems were discovered and the owners of the building began a massive renovation project.

While much of the outside work has already been completed, a considerable amount of work still

needs to be done inside the building and it remains unoccupied. Current plans call for a lounge and pizzeria to be located in the historic structure.

shop in the alley, and at one time, he and his wife, Eleanor, were the managers of a dry goods store about a block east.

corner of Jefferson and Clark streets, just north of the Pilcher Publishing Co. offices, until 1935.

Viant was the grandson of John W. Viant, a Lowell businessman in the 1850s and the builder of a three-story building at the corner of Clark Street and Commercial Avenue which was destroyed in the big fire of 1898.

Bird has been blamed for once placing a sarcastic sign at the outskirts of town that read: "DRINK NATURE'S TONIC, LOWELL'S SULPHUR WATER."

The sign is believed to have been painted by his father, Fred, a sign painter by trade.

Bird also worked for a Chicago newspaper for a time and served as Lowell's town marshal for four years during World War II until his death in June 1945.

A.B. Hayhurst was also the owner of a restaurant in the building, as well as several other locations in town. But time took its toll and the old worn out building was torn down and has never been replaced.

The building on the west also served as many different enterprises. It once housed the Crown Tavern, which was owned and operated by Louis Berg Sr., one of Lowell's postmasters.

## Drink Nature's Tonic, Lowell's Sulfur Water

**A sign painted with these words once stood on the outskirts of town. It is thought to have been placed by Charles Bird Viant and painted by his father Fred.**

### VACANT LAND ONCE THRIVING

At one time, the two vacant lots on the south side of Commercial Avenue near its intersection with Mill Street were thriving businesses.

Two frame buildings with tall, square fronts, typical of the era, were constructed around 1875.

Abram Callner owned the building on the east at the turn of the century. He was known to have operated a junk

Hermoine Thompson Tillman, the last surviving child of pioneers Oliver and Carlinda Surprise, was the operator of a millinery shop in one of the frame buildings.

Charles Bird Viant and his wife Ida Berg Viant purchased the restaurant operating out of the building from Dewey Childress in 1925. Their establishment was a popular eatery in Lowell for about two decades.

At one time, Bird was manager of the Grand Theater, which stood on the



Snell Chevrolet as seen in 1964. The dealership is still located in Lowell, but has since moved to larger quarters at 700 W. Commercial.





Shoppers line the Commercial Avenue shops during the annual Lowell Chamber of Commerce-sponsored Sidewalk Sale in 1972.

In 1860 John W. Viant built this three story building located on the corner of Clark St. and Commercial Ave. The first floor housed his general store. The second floor was used by the Van Weavers for their funeral equipment. The third floor was the Colfax Lodge meeting rooms. This building burned in the big fire of Oct. 4, 1898.



## George Kimmet was busy local entrepreneur

For several years, George Kimmet, one of the town's busiest businessmen, was the owner of the frame building and managed a variety store there called The Fair.

He also established a grocery store across the street at the site of the current Lowell Carpet and Coverings.

In addition to his other business enterprises, George Kimmet also had a department store in 1899, and in the early 1900s, established the town's first 5- and 10-cent store. He also ran an ice house for a few years.

A 1905 advertisement for The Fair featured men's work shirts for 25 cents, overalls for 50 cents, a set of violin strings for 15 cents, wash tubs for 65 cents, 12 boxes of matches for 10 cents and men's or ladies' house for 10 cents.

Kimmet retired to his Halsted Street home in 1927 and became an

ardent gardener along the banks of Cedar Creek.

Hailed as the oldest former businessman in town during the Lowell Centennial Celebration in 1952, he died in 1956 at the age of 91.

L.W. "Billy" Brown later bought the store and renamed it Brown's Bazaar.

Brown, a veteran of World War I, was a well-known local businessman for many years and later became the assistant manager of the Sears Roebuck and Co. store in downtown Lowell.

An interesting 1925 advertisement for Brown's Bazaar featured brooms for 47 cents, fly swatters for 10 cents, window shades for 69 cents, kiddies' overalls for 95 cents and straw hats for 15 cents. Brown remained active in his community and church until he died in 1984.

In later years, the building housed several business endeavors, including a pool hall, bowling alley and Frick's Recreation Center before it was torn down.

### VACANT LOT TURNS INTO BUSINESSES

The building which now houses four separate businesses at 222, 224, 302 and 304 E. Commercial Ave., was not part of the town's early history.

The more modern brick structure was erected sometime around 1930 by Albert Bastiani.

For many years, the property was vacant, with a deep dropoff from the sidewalk on Commercial Avenue.

The alley could easily be seen from the sidewalk, and just south of the alley, an old frame building which formerly housed a harness shop, was

a second hand store operated by Abram Callner.

Surrounded by ancient farm equipment and various other kinds of junk items, Callner's shop also bought and sold chickens and eggs.

The area was especially busy on Saturday nights, however, when the community band played on a bandshell erected on poles near the sidewalk.

Lowell's businesses were open until 10 p.m. for many years, and families would come shop in town at the grocery or department stores and meet their friends.

The Saturday night program consisted of a band concert, the movies, a play, and ice cream socials on the town square, another place where the band played.

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Cars line both sides of the Commercial Avenue business district in this 1930 photograph. For nearly 150 years, the downtown area has been the hub of activity in the community.



One of the newest businesses in the town's downtown area is Keith Hefner Photography, which opened its doors at 224 E. Commercial Ave. in 2001.



Through the years, numerous businesses have operated out of various sections of the brick building located at the intersection of Commercial Avenue and Mill Street, including a men's clothing store, a shoe store, an A&P grocery store and a number of popular eateries.

# Saturday nights were special here

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

When the concerts were on the stand near Mill Street, horse rigs and autos could be found parked along the lower level of the property at the alley line, as well as up and down Commercial Avenue, where angled parking was then in vogue.

The Community Band was comprised of musicians from the upper grade school classes and adults. They were always warmly received and drew large applause — and the sound of automobile horns — after each performance.

With so much going on, many farmers were still shopping at 9 p.m. waiting for store clerks to weigh and total up their purchases. Shopping went on until 10 p.m. or until everyone was waited on. The storekeepers were known for showing their appre-

ciation for large orders by treating youngsters to a big bag of assorted candy to take home with them.

The new building at 304 E. Commercial Ave., besides filling the big vacant hole in the downtown business district, has housed various types of businesses since it was built.

Glenn Bolt started his meat market in the east section of the building in 1932. Ed Schrader was the operator of the sweet shop, a popular place for the younger set.

Another well-known businessman, Fred W. Minninger, moved his men's store, The Toggery, to the north side of Commercial Avenue and remained in business there for many years.

For a time, the store was owned by Dorsey "Red" Chism, and later operated by Jack Eskridge, a descendant of the pioneer family and known

for his years of service to the Lowell Volunteer Fire Department. He currently serves as the town's fire chief.

Robert Kalembo later expanded the business to include the space now known as 302 E. Commercial Ave.

This space, the largest in the structure, for many years housed the Atlantic and Pacific grocery store. Wellington Clark, a member of another familiar pioneer family, served as manager of the A&P for many years.

In later years, that section of the building became the home of Mike Milakovic's shoe store. Most recently, it was occupied by the Born to be Worn resale clothing store. It is currently unoccupied.

The smaller shop just west of the former men's store was the Amidei 5- and 10-cent store for many years. The busy variety shop was first operated

by Mr. and Mrs. Louis Amidei Sr., and then by the couple's son, Louis Jr.

Various business endeavors have operated out of that portion of the building since that time, including liquor stores and the Majdak Music Mart.

It is currently occupied by Keith Hefner Photography and carries the address of 224 E. Commercial Ave.

The shop at the far west end of the building, which now has the address of 222 E. Commercial Ave., will be remembered as the longtime home of Trump's Restaurant.

Claude and Mae Trump operated the popular eatery for 22 years. In 1950, Claude became the town's night patrolman and died in 1954 at the age of 72. Phoebe Mae Trump died in 1975, reaching the age of 92.

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# Many faces of downtown business district

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 32

The Trumps were followed in business by several restaurant operators, including Matt Parthenakis, who is fondly remembered for his community activities, such as parties for the town's old-timers on their birthdays.

While the restaurant has had several names through the years, including Don's, Matt's and most recently, Sadi's.

The building is currently occupied by NeatRepeats, a resale shop.

Years later, a smaller masonry building was constructed by John Black at 220 E. Commercial Ave.

A liquor store operated by Joe Haberzette was the first occupant of the new building. The Lump Insurance office moved there in January 1972.

The insurance office remained there until 1977, when owner Leon Lump and his son, Thomas, moved their business to a newly-remodeled building nearby on Mill Street.

The building was later occupied by the Flower Gallery and is currently the home of Salon 220 and Merle Norman Cosmetics operated by Barb Crepeau.

## PUTTING ON THE RITZ

The original part of the building which now houses the Mid-Town Hardware and Garden Center, 306 E. Commercial Ave., was constructed in the early 1920s by Bernard Carlin, a West Creek farmer.

Carlin rented the building to Thomas Arnott, who operated a furniture

and upholstery shop.

Edward Yates and his wife, Alice, became the owners of the building later in the decade and continued to operate a furniture store there for several years until the decision made to open a theater.

Lowell had been without a movie theater for several years following the closing of the Grand on Clark Street.

In about 1930, the building was converted for this new enterprise by adding 40 feet to the south end of the structure, slanting the floor and re-decorating. A canopy was added to the front of the building and the words Ritz were installed in lights.

In 1934, the building was rented to Kurt Laemmle, nephew of Hollywood movie producer Carl Laemmle.

The business was sold again in

1943, and the Ritz was then operated by Patrick and Loretta Byrnes.

The Byrnes' continued to operate the Ritz until 1952, when their new building was constructed on Mill Street. The new theater was given the name Palo, a combination of the couple's first names.

History repeated itself when the former theater was again remodeled, the slanted floor raised and a furniture store moved into the structure.

John and Katherine Esser and Emery and Edith Sautter were partners in the firm, which specialized in fine furniture and upholstery. They purchased the building in 1954 and remained in business there until the early 1960s.

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Sidewalk sales have traditionally attracted shoppers in great numbers to downtown Lowell. Here, the Mid-Town Hardware Mart and The Toggery display their wares outdoors in 1972.



The Ritz, a downtown movie theater, operated out of the building now occupied by Mid-Town Hardware and Garden Center from 1930 to 1952. It is shown in a 1942 photograph.



# Old theatre returns to roots

*Downtown building is converted into hardware store once again*

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 33

## BAKERY ON THE MOVE

Gordon Fitzgerald, who had purchased the well-established West Side Hardware in 1955, moved the business to the old downtown theatre building in 1963 and changed the name of the store to Mid-Town Hardware.

William Dahl went to work for Fitzgerald in 1967 and purchased the business in 1976. It is currently owned and operated by Carl Ferrell.

The building just east of the hardware store, now the home of McNally Dental, 308 E. Commercial Ave., was built on land once owned by the pioneer Gerrish estate.

Prominent local businessmen Emil Ruge and Carl Gragg constructed the building in 1930, using the front office for their loan company for a few years while renting out the rear offices to other local businesses.

In 1937, the building was purchased by Dr. Neal Davis. Dr. Loyal W. Combs, a member of another well-known family, was also the owner of the offices for a few years.

He was followed by Dr. Robert Smith, Dr. David Templin, Dr. Randall Hile and Dr. Sampanta Boonjaren.

The Lowell Clinic operated out of the building until it moved to its current location in the Mid-Town Plaza farther down Commercial Avenue.

George Washington Heilig came to Lowell in 1897 and opened a bakery and confectionery on the present site of Lowell Carpet and Coverings, 317 E. Commercial Ave.

On his birthday, Oct. 4, 1898, the building burned to the ground during the big fire that flattened most of the businesses on the north side of Commercial Avenue.

After moving to temporary quarters for a time, he relocated to an old frame structure which once stood at the site where The Vault now stands at 316 E. Commercial Ave.

When the Lowell National Bank building was erected there in 1903, Heilig was again forced to move.

But this time he constructed his own building at 310 E. Commercial Ave.

The popular bakery and ice cream shop remained in business until his retirement in 1935.

Glen Bolt, one of Lowell's most progressive merchants, who had opened a meat market in town in 1932, purchased the Heilig building in 1935 and added groceries to his shop the following year.

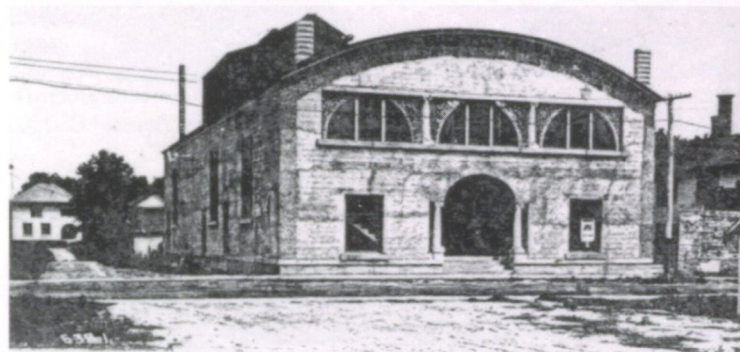
A 1940 advertisement for Bolt's IGA Modern Market which appeared in the Lowell Tribune featured a box of Wheaties for 10 cents, smoked ham for 16 cents a pound, 3 pounds of coffee for 39 cents and sirloin steak for 29 cents per pound.

When the business grew beyond the capacity of the building, Bolt sold the Commercial Avenue building and constructed a new Super Mart on Washington Street, now the site of Costas Foods.

The grand opening of the new store took place in December 1950 and featured the addition of the new Super Bakery operated by Joe Ottengheime.

Today, what was once the home of Bolt's original IGA is occupied by The Art Gallery.

The Grand Theatre (top) and its patrons (bottom) circa 1914.



The McNally Dental Center, 308 E. Commercial Ave., operates out of a building that has been a part of the town's medical community since 1937.



From 1932 through 1950, Glenn Bolt's IGA grocery store was located at 310 E. Commercial Ave. Today, the building is the home of The Art Gallery.



The Roberts Drug Store building was remodeled by Charles Roberts in 1947 and remained a downtown fixture for the next four decades. It is shown during the 1969 sidewalk sales.



Lowell's newest eatery, The Stork's Nest and Lounge, is located in the renovated building at 312 E. Commercial Ave. which formerly housed the popular Roberts Drug Store.



Like many other communities, through the years the town's downtown business district has evolved from the traditional larger stores to a variety of specialty and antique shops and restaurants which still attract local shoppers as well as visitors to Lowell.

# Drug store was longtime fixture

In about 1918, an old frame building at 312 E. Commercial Ave., was leveled to make way for a new brick structure.

Constructed by Peter A. Berg, the building housed the Hunt Drug Store operated by Frank Hunt.

Hunt, who had moved his business from about a block east, remained in business until the late 1920s.

Following Hunt's retirement, Keith Hunter, a native of Kentland, took over the business and renamed it Hunter's Drug Store. In 1947, Charles Roberts remodeled the original building as well as the adjacent building on the west and added a rear entrance to what would be known as the Roberts Drug Store for the next four decades.

The building is now the home of the town's newest eatery, The Stork's Nest and Lounge.

## FROM SUITS TO JEWELRY

The current location of Sickinger's Jewelry, 314 E. Commer-

cial Ave., was once the site of a tall, square front frame building believed to have been constructed around 1870 but replaced by the current brick structure in the early 1900s.

It was first occupied by the tailor shop of H. Gershman. The firm later changed its name to Gershman and Berlow.

Queen Weaver, the daughter of H.V. Weaver, a well known local funeral director, was the proprietor of a camera and music store in the building in later years.

In the mid-1920s, Ed Schraeder operated an ice cream parlor at the location until moving his business farther west on Commercial later in the decade.

Dr. Anderson, a prominent local physician, also had his offices there for several years.

In 1941, Henry Sickinger moved his jewelry store from the building two doors east.

Now in its third generation of operation, the family business first started in 1928 is managed by James Sickinger and his wife, Cathy.

*A variety of businesses including a drug store, restaurant, tailor shop, ice cream parlor, dr.'s office, and jewelry store have all been located on Commercial Avenue.*



# Ex-bank building has a rich history

The distinctive brick and limestone building at 316 E. Commercial Ave. in the heart of the downtown business district wasn't always standing there.

When the downtown area was first developed, a two-story frame structure sat on the property.

Several of Lowell's early business owners were storekeepers in the original building.

Frank Weakly, who would later become known for his work as a jeweler, was the owner of a grocery store and a restaurant on the lower level of the building in the 1870s.

Hales Hall, the site of numerous social events in Lowell, was located on the second floor of the original frame building.

Cyril C. Sanger opened a hardware store on the first floor of the building in 1874. Sometime later the Lavino brothers operated an art gallery in the building.

In 1903, Lowell National Bank announced plans to purchase the property, then referred to as "the Carrie Sanger Place."

Just before the bank bought the property, the building was occupied by a bakery and restaurant operated by George Heilig. At the time, Heilig also sold fruit and tobacco.

The old building had been leveled but construction was not yet completed on the new brick and limestone

structure when the Lowell National Bank first opened for business on May 15, 1903 in what is now a part of the building just west of Bennett's Auto Care, 221 E. Commercial Ave.

Deposits for that day were \$3,884.60, with total resources amounting to \$21,209.85.

The first bank officers were Frank Nelson, president; George P. Bailey, vice president; and Peter A. Berg, cashier.

During the summer of 1958, the bank moved from its downtown office to a new building at 155 Mill St., now the site of the Loyal Order of the Moose Lodge 2437.

The bank relocated to a new building at 651 Commercial Ave.

Tech Mutual Savings and Loan Co., which got its start in 1960, moved to the original downtown site of the Lowell National Bank in 1968.

In 1984, after an extensive remodeling project, Tech, then renamed Mutual Federal Savings Bank, moved into Lowell National Bank's former Mill Street location.

The Lowell Branch of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles was housed in the original bank building on Commercial Avenue until it moved to its current location at 150 Deanna Drive.

The historic bank building is now occupied by The Vault, a specialty store featuring treasures both old and new.



An early 1900s view of downtown Lowell looking southeast from the historic bank building at 316 E. Commercial Ave.



Today, the distinctive building that has housed many financial institutions through the years has been restored to its original facade and is the home of The Vault, a specialty store which features treasures both old and new.



The historic limestone bank building has not changed much from the way it appeared in 1920, but the face of the downtown district has undergone several changes since that time.



Employees are shown at work at the Lowell National Bank in this 1915 photograph. The bank building remains a downtown focal point.





Shoppers check out the outdoor bargains during the 1983 Sidewalk Sale sponsored by the Lowell Chamber of Commerce.



Although the names of the businesses and the types of shops have changed through the years, the look of the Commercial Avenue downtown district from the Clark Street vantage point has not been dramatically altered since this photo was taken in 1909.

# Old barber shop still place for style

J.M. Castle constructed a pair of downtown buildings around 1890.

A small frame building once stood at 318 E. Commercial Ave., now the home of Classy Cuts Hair and Tanning.

For many years, it was the home of Bill Grant's barber shop before he relocated his business to the north side of Commercial Avenue near Clark Street.

The current brick building, erected at the site several years later, was first occupied by Frank Weakly, who operated a jewelry store there from the early 1900s until the mid-1920s, when he sold the business to Neva Dickinson, one of his employees.

Dickinson sold the store to Henry Sickinger in 1928. Sickinger's Jewelry remained there until 1941, when the business was moved a few doors west.

Over the years, the building has housed an appliance repair shop, several beauty shops, a gift shop and an office supply store.

Although just one business now occupies the building, at one time two separate businesses were located there.

The second office at 320 E. Commercial Ave. was the site of the N.W. Slusser barber shop in the early 1900s.

Slusser also maintained a bathtub in the rear of the shop for gentlemen to use for their weekly baths.

Victor K. Roberts had his law office in the Castle building for 19 years.

Earle "Babe" Tanner started his

barber shop in the same building in January 1930 and remained in business there for nearly 60 years.

Fred V. Hayden, a member of an early pioneer family, began his insurance agency behind the barber shop in 1932 and remained in business there for several years.

Hayden sold his insurance agency prior to being named Lowell's postmaster in 1953.

Castle's adjacent building at 322 E. Commercial Ave. was used as a general store for many years which Castle himself operated.

Daniel Chapman was a butcher there for a time, assisted by his son, Albert.

Edward Berg, a longtime local merchant, operated a men's clothing store in the building for several years. He also did dry cleaning on the back porch of the shop with a homemade machine.

The National Tea Company occupied the building for nearly three decades. Harry Gordon was the manager of the grocery store for 27 years.

Among the occupants that followed National in the building after its 1950 closing were the Cardinal grocery store operated by A.B. Hayhurst, Hoshaw Shoe Sales and Repair and the Lawson Shoe Store.

For the past several years the building has been occupied by Osburn Insurance and Century II Insurance.



The frame buildings which were once located at 318 E. Commercial Ave. and 322 E. Commercial Ave. have long since been replaced by these brick structures. They have housed a number of businesses, including a jewelry store, barber shop, beauty shop and a grocery.



# The Davis Store 118 year link to past

Like so many of the town's downtown buildings, the current home of Felicia's, 324 E. Commercial Ave., has had a long and varied history.

Edward J. Pixley operated a jewelry store in the building for many years.

Pixley actually started his business on the north side of the street in a room in the J.W. Viant building, which was destroyed in the big fire of 1898.

Pixley, who remained in business for 48 years, also served on the Lowell Town Board for two terms.

Not long after Pixley's death in 1939, Joseph Eich operated a tavern out of the building for a short time.

## DESCENDENTS OF 1849 PIONEERS OF BUCKLEY HOMESTEAD

Later the same year, Francis "Gene" Buckley purchased the business.

Buckley's father, Patrick Buckley, a Civil War veteran, was the youngest member of the family of Dennis and Catherine Buckley, the 1849 pioneers of the Buckley Homestead.

Gene Buckley continued to operate the tavern until 1955, when he sold the business to his son-in-law, Walter Fleener, who ran Buck's Tavern for many years.

John Dougherty was one of several owners of the business after Fleener retired.

Before being transformed into an

antique and collectables shop, the tavern was known as J's Tap, and remained a popular downtown spot for cocktails.

The Davis Store, 402 E. Commercial Ave., is downtown Lowell's oldest continuous business.

Established in 1884 by Elizabeth "Lizzie" Davis, it has remained in the family for 118 years.

Davis' millinery store featured ladies hats, dresses and accessories. That legacy continues today. The store has been operated by four generations of the Davis family.

Marie Ashton, the niece of the original owner, managed the store for many years. Her son, Ceylon "Jack" Ashton, and his wife, Gladys, were the owners of the business from 1938 to 1955.

Their daughter, Margery Ashton Beier, is the current proprietor of the popular store.

Interestingly, from 1918 to 1920, two of the rooms above The Davis Store housed the town's first library.

In 1999, the business received state recognition when it was presented with the Lieutenant Governor's Century Business Award. The award honors Indiana companies that have been in business for 100 years or more and possess a strong history of community service.

The east section of the shop has also been used by several different businesses.

While details are sketchy about the early years of the building, in the 1920s, it was the home of a tire store and an auto repair shop.



Felicia's, an antique and collectable shop at 324 E. Commercial Ave., was the former home of a jewelry store and in later years, a popular tavern.



Elizabeth "Lizzie" Davis established The Davis Store at 402 E. Commercial Ave. in 1884 and remains downtown Lowell's oldest continuous business.



The Davis Store, 402 E. Commercial Ave., has been a part of the downtown business district since 1884 and remains in the Davis family.





In 1999, The Davis Store was presented with the Lieutenant Governor's Century Business Award for being in business for more than 100 years.



Construction was well under way on the Sheets Funeral Home and Furniture Store at 410 E. Commercial Ave. in this 1929 photograph.



The building which today houses Lowell Taekwondo at 408 E. Commercial Ave. sits where the town's first school house was located.

# First school was part of downtown

In the mid-1930s, the building housed Speelmon Motors, which sold and repaired used cars.

The Speelmons were also the managers of the Lowell License Branch, which also operated out of the building for a time.

Prior to being remodeled as part of The Davis Store, it housed The Red Devil Restaurant.

The adjacent vacant storefront at 406 E. Commercial Ave. was once a market and later a restaurant, both operated by William W. Bartz, a well-known local businessman.

In more recent years, it housed The Paper House.

## BUSINESS WAS SITE OF TOWN'S FIRST SCHOOL

Although there's no evidence of it today, the building which houses Lowell Taekwondo at 408 E. Commercial Ave. was actually once the site of Lowell's first school.

The town's first school, a 20-by-30-foot brick structure, was used until the 1860s.

Sometime after that, the brick schoolhouse was replaced by a frame building with a tall ornate facade and a balcony that stretched over the front entrance.

For many years, the building was occupied by Hago F. Carstens, a member of one of the town's pioneer families, who ran a harness shop.

Carstens died in 1909 following a gasoline explosion and the business was sold to Nick Jourdain and Tho-

mas McGonigal.

Ill health forced the early retirement of McGonigal. John Hack and Jim Hale also owned the business for a time.

Clyde King and his wife Hattie operated a photographic studio in the building for awhile. A 1919 newspaper advertisement shows the King's shop selling Sonora phonographs priced at \$50 and up.

The Kings also operated a grocery store and meat market there for several years.

Most recently, the building housed a computer store, RTL Systems Inc., before it relocated to the Mid-Town Plaza at 1046 E. Commercial Ave.

## FURNITURE STORE AND FUNERAL PARLOR

What is known today as the Treasure Hunt Mall, 410 E. Commercial Ave., was jointly operated as a furniture store and funeral parlor for many years.

Martin Schur founded the business in 1872. His widow, Barbara, sold the business to William Sheets in 1905.

John Castle, an embalmer for Schur, stayed on with Sheets in the business. It was later passed on to his son, Kenneth Sheets, and then to his grandson, William Sheets.

After the funeral parlor was relocated to the corner of Commercial Avenue and Union Street, the building was remodeled and the furniture store was operated by John Sheets.





Town street crews remove built up snow from the south side of the downtown business district following an early-1980 snowstorm.



Treasure Hunt Mall, 410 E. Commercial Ave., was once the site of a funeral home and furniture store.



In 1952, the Pletcher and Spindler Hardware Co. was located at 414 E. Commercial Ave. Today, it is a church resale shop.

# Hardware was big on Commercial

The current home of the Lowell United Methodist Church Resale Shop, 414 E. Commercial Ave., was constructed in 1892 and has provided various goods and services to the community over the years.

A grocery store was located there for several years under different names and owners, as well as a meat market.

For many years, the building housed the egg store of L.Y. Cowl.

Known for crying out "Yip, yip," as he made his rounds picking up eggs from the farmers, this quickly became Cowl's nickname.

By 1918, Cowl had traded his team and wagon for a truck and operated an express service to Chicago.

The Weaver and McGlaughlin poultry and egg store also operated out of the building for a time before the Pletcher and Spindler Hardware Co.

Store owners Alvah Pletcher and Henry Spindler were following in the footsteps of their fathers, who were partners in a department store, Spindler and Pletcher, which was destroyed in the great fire of 1898.

## AND MORE HARDWARE...

What we now know as Kleen Sweep, 416 E. Commercial Ave., was also used as a hardware store for decades.

At about the turn of the century, it was owned and operated by the Burnham Brothers, Herman and Fred.

Advertisements for the business between the years of 1903 and 1913 show a number of interesting products, including kitchen ranges for \$30 and an announcement of the arrival of a carload of cider barrels to be sold at a special price.

T.J. Moran had a tin shop in the same building in 1903 and advertised a full line of plumbing, heating and steam fittings.

In about 1913, the adjacent Lynch Brothers Department Store added a hardware department and connected the building to the department store with an archway.

The Lynch Brothers sold the store to Fred W. Schmal, who operated a hardware store there until his retire-

ment in 1934.

The Lowell Post Office was located in the building for many years. It also served as the home of the Lowell License Bureau for a time.

## DRUG STORE WAS THE FIRST OCCUPANT

The building which currently houses South County Office Supply, 418 E. Commercial Ave., got its start as a drug store.

Frank Hunt operated Hunt's Drug Store out of the lower level of the building, while the Lowell Telephone Co. used the rooms above.

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# Sears continued a retail tradition

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 40

A fire of unknown origin started in the building now known as South County Office Supply at about 2 a.m. on Nov. 9, 1905.

Two young women – Edith M. Simpson, 22, and her sister, Abbie B. Simpson, 21 – perished in the blaze. One of the sisters was the night telephone operator and the other had stayed with her for company that night.

The stock of the drug store was a total loss and much of the telephone

equipment had to be replaced as a result of the fire.

The building later became part of the Lynch Brothers Department Store while the drug store relocated down the street to the building which would later house Roberts Drugs at 312 E. Commercial Ave.

It would later become part of the Spindler Company and Sears, Roebuck and Co. department stores, which operated out of several adjacent downtown buildings.

In more recent years, the building

housed a gun shop, Lowell Sports and Guns.

The upstairs rooms were also operated as separate businesses for several years.

## LOWELL'S LARGEST STORE HAS RICH RETAIL PAST

The building occupied by Hawkeye's T-Go, and until late last year, the X-Zone and Club X at 420 E. Commercial Ave., was for many years Lowell's largest store.

The large two-story building got its start as a retail outlet, and continued to serve the town as a department store for several decades.

In 1905, George Hoevet and Emil Ruge purchased the business from Frank E. Nelson, a well-known local businessman.

The partners worked hard to remodel the department store, and soon added another department, that of undertaking.

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For many years, the building at 420 E. Commercial Ave. was Lowell's largest department store. In 1940, it was the home of Sears, Roebuck and Co.



Several neighboring buildings were connected with archways to provide Sears, Roebuck and Co. with the retail space it needed. It is shown in a 1969 photograph.



Hawkeye's T-Go is currently located in a portion of the building which once housed the town's biggest retailer, Sears, Roebuck and Co.



The Lynch Brothers Department Store operated in downtown Lowell from 1916 to 1930. The C.J. Spindler Company later had a thriving business there before selling all of its stores to Sears, Roebuck and Company in 1944. Sears remained in Lowell until 1974. The Lynch store is shown at the far left in this downtown photograph from 1916.



## Lynch set the standard for retailers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 39

H.V. Weaver was hired as the manager of both the undertaking and furniture departments.

Other departments at Hoevet and Ruge's included clothing, groceries and toys.

Newspapers in 1911 showed only the Hoevet name in the advertisements for the department store. One ad featured, "Lawns, the 25-cent kind, for 18 cents." Lawns was a lightweight fabric sometimes used in the making of underclothing.

Calico was shown at the sale price of 4 cents per yard, while another store notice read, "We will soon be cutting the 250-pound cheese."

Ladies sweaters were featured at the sale price of 75 cents each.

The store was later purchased by Lynch Brothers, and was operated by John Lynch and his sons, Ernest and Fay.

Well-known throughout Lake County, the Lynch Brothers department store operated in town from 1916 to 1930.

The Spindler Company later had a thriving business there.

C.J. Spindler started his chain of stores in Valparaiso, then opened more in Lowell and Rensselaer in

1932. The chain continued to grow, and soon stores were added in Warsaw, Kentland, Knox, Kendallville and Monticello.

Alvah Pletcher, a well-known local businessman, was the first manager at the Lowell branch. Jack Spindler was transferred to Rensselaer and Earl Teghmeier became manager. L.W. "Billy" Brown served as his assistant.

The Spindler Company sold all of its stores to Sears, Roebuck and Company in 1944.

With the help of able managers such as Roy Nixon, Sears remained in Lowell until 1974.

At one time, the store was connected by archways to all of the buildings up to the present Methodist Church Resale Shop.

Following the departure of Sears, the building housed a sporting goods store for several years.

It later became a mini-mall, and was the site of Thermal Energy, a heating and cooling business, and an outlet for the Radio Shack chain.

It was followed by a candy store and Audrey's, a bakery shop which featured cakes, desserts and party supplies.

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Shoppers stroll along the shoveled sidewalks while Commercial Ave. appears virtually impassible in this wintry 1911 photograph. As far back as 1905, the building was used as a department store.



Martha Smith operated Martha's Dress Shop at 422 E. Commercial Ave. for more than 50 years. The historic building originally housed the town's first bank. Hats and dresses were made to order by Mrs. Smith, shown in a 1976 photograph.



Town and Chamber of Commerce officials were on hand to help welcome Portobello and Old Town Appraisers to its new location at 422 E. Commercial Ave. in 2001. The businesses moved from a building across the street.



Lowell's first bank, the Wiggins Bank, was constructed in 1891. For many years the upstairs offices of the building were occupied by doctors and dentists. For more than 50 years, Martha's Dress Shop was located on the main level of the building.

## Original bank now houses gift shop

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 41

Meanwhile, a portion of the building became Hawkeye's, a popular cozy eatery operated by Nancy Hawkins and Kristine Klarich.

For most of 2001, Connie Newsome ran Club X and the X Zone, a teen club and youth center, out of the east side of the building and the rooms on the second floor of the building. That portion of the building is currently unoccupied.

Plans to open a lounge there stalled in early 2002 when the Lake County Liquor Board denied the issuance of a liquor license.

### LOWELL'S FIRST BANK IS NOW A GIFT SHOP

The nicely restored building at 422 E. Commercial Ave., which now houses Portobello and Old Town Appraisers, was constructed in 1891 as the town's first bank.

The rooms above the Wiggins Bank were occupied by many of Lowell's first doctors and dentists.

In 1900, the State Bank moved across the street to a building which still stands today at the corner of Wall Street and Commercial Avenue. Its name was changed to State National Bank before being taken over by

Lowell National Bank in 1930.

In 1906, the original downtown bank building was owned by John A. Kimmet, whose daughter, Lena, operated a millinery shop on the lower level.

A newspaper advertisement for the shop touted, "an extensive stock of all modern and best styles of ladies hats."

Dr. John E. Davis, a prominent local physician, had his offices on the second floor of the building for many years.

Soon after his arrival in Lowell in 1869, Davis went into the drug business with Charles Post, operating under the name of Davis and Post.

The physician's practice became so large that he was soon forced to give up his part of the business.

The busy doctor was also very interested in the affairs of his town, as was his friend and sometimes associate, Dr. E.R. Bacon.

Davis served as a school trustee, was secretary of the Board of Health, and just two months before his death in August 1905, was elected to the position as president of the State National Bank of Lowell.

Dr. W.V. Gooder occupied the offices following Davis' death.

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# Building has ties to past

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 43

Dr. John Dinwiddie, a dentist and member of an early pioneer family, also had offices on the second floor of the building.

During the 1920s, he was assisted by his son, Dr. Abott Dinwiddie.

For more than 50 years, Martha Smith was the owner of a hat and dress shop on the first floor, where hats and dresses were made to order.

Gene and Pat Eli operated their travel agency, Travel Shoppe Ltd. Inc., out of the building for many years until Mrs. Eli's untimely death in 2001.

Sharon Speichert purchased the building from Gene Eli later the same year and moved her two downtown businesses from the building she owns across the street at 407 E. Commercial Ave.

Portobello's, a gift shop, is housed on the first floor of the building and Old Town Appraisers Ltd. is located on the second floor.

## CHAMBER BUILDING WAS ONCE OUR TOWN HALL

The two-story brick building at 428 E. Commercial Ave. which now houses the offices of the Lowell Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center was erected in 1922 as the new Lowell Town Hall.

At that time, the town offices were moved from a much older building on Mill Street.

The property for the new building was donated to the town by Dr. Jabez Clark. Clark came to what would more than a decade later become Lowell in 1837 and was one of Lake County's earliest pioneers.

Officials described the new Town Hall as "a building that our citizens can well feel proud of" at the time of its opening.

The first floor of the building housed the town offices, while the back of the building was used for the



When the Town of Lowell moved its municipal offices down the street, the Police Department took over the former Town Hall building at 428 E. Commercial Ave. The building was erected in 1922 and for many years housed all of the town offices and the police and fire departments.



Since 1995, the former Town Hall building has been the home of the Lowell Chamber of Commerce.

storage of fire apparatus. Two jail cells were also located on the first floor, along with washroom and shower facilities.

A vault for the safe storage of town records was also situated on the first floor.

One large room was located on the second floor and was used for town meetings and other public gatherings. Many local groups and organizations used the meeting room for card parties, dinners and other public activities.

The building was served by a steam heating furnace.

"The Town Board has erected a building that will be adequate for Lowell for a great many years," officials said at the opening of the new building. "They had in mind a substantial building and for that reason bought good materials and endeavored to get the best value for their money."

While the Town Hall would continue to serve the needs of the growing community for the next 50 years,

several pieces of fire equipment were often forced to be stored outdoors, leading the Lowell Volunteer Fire Department to move to a larger station on North Fremont Street in 1950.

On May 2, 1973, the Lowell Town Hall was moved to the former library building at 512 E. Commercial Ave.

The town's Police Department took over the former Town Hall following the relocation of the town offices.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 45







In the town's early years, the area we now know as Olde Towne Square was in fact the town square. The vacant land, used for foot races, ice cream socials and band concerts, is shown as it appeared in 1900.



During the 1970s, with the assistance of the Army Corps of Engineers, the town square was developed into Senior Citizens Park.



Throughout the many changes made to the downtown park, the Three Creeks Monument has remained its focal point.

# Town square a link to yesteryear

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 44

The Lowell Police Department left the building in August 1994 following the construction of a new Police Station on the east side of town at 1333 E. Commercial Ave.

After extensive remodeling, the Chamber of Commerce moved into the building in October 1995.

### TOWN SQUARE LINKS PAST WITH TODAY

In the town's early years, the small park we now know as Olde Towne Square was just an open area with a few small houses and barns nearby.

There were no monuments, buildings or fountains on the property in those days.

The land for the square was given to the town by Dr. Jabez Clark when he platted his addition to Lowell.

The little park was used for foot races, ice cream socials and band concerts.

For many years, a hitching post stood just west of the square. It was a handy place for businessmen and shoppers to tie their horses.

That property, also donated to the town by Jabez Clark, remained vacant until the Town Hall was constructed there in 1922.

At the turn of the century, a water tower, or "standpipe" as it was locally known at the time, was erected on the square.

Used for storage and pressure for the town's first municipal water system, the big tower stored hundreds of

gallons of sulphur water. Many young daredevils would also climb the iron ladder to the top of the 100-foot tower.

The "standpipe" remained in use until 1957, when a new modern water tank was built near the pumping station on the east side of Liberty Street.

When the old tower was torn down, the concrete base was left. It served as the rim for the fountain which was located in the park for some time. Today, the former fountain is used as a large planter.

In June 1905, more than 4,000 people crowded onto the square for the dedication of the Three Creeks Monument.

The big stone monument is more than 25 feet high and weighs more than 45 tons. It lists the names of 504

soldiers, sailors and one Navy nurse, the local veterans of the War of 1812, the Mexican War, the Civil War and the Spanish-American War.

Constructed of fine granite, the monument cost \$3,000 to erect.

In 1971, the Lowell Town Board, Lowell Park Board and the Lowell Women's Club began discussions on developing the square into Senior Citizens Park.

With a \$4,200 donation from the Women's Club and the assistance of numerous community-minded citizens who donated their time and talents, walkways, benches and shrubbery were added to the downtown park. A shuffle board court was also installed.

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The Three Creeks Monument has been a part of Lowell since 1905, when the fine granite monument was constructed at a cost of \$3,000. It lists the names of 504 soldiers, sailors and one Navy nurse. This photograph was taken in 1969.



When the old water tower was torn down, the concrete base was used as the rim for a park fountain. Today, the former fountain is used as a large planter and maintained by the Lowell Women's Club. The fountain is shown in a 1980 photograph.



Originally constructed in 1920 with the assistance of the New York-based Carnegie Foundation, the Lowell Public Library was located at 512 E. Commercial Ave. until December 1969, when a new building was opened at the corner of Main and Fremont streets. In May 1973, the remodeled library building became the new Lowell Town Hall. The town offices remained at that location until December 1994. Since 1995, it has been used as a real estate office.



# Former library becomes Town Hall

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 45

A gazebo was constructed in the park in 1989 and has been the site of several small weddings since that time.

The Parks and Recreation Department explored the possibility of renaming Senior Citizen Park in 1998 and found almost unanimous support for a move to return the park to its former name.

In September 1999, the park was rededicated as Olde Towne Square. To reflect its history, the new park sign is situated on a hitching post.

The Lowell Women's Club continues to help the Parks and Recreation Department maintain the facility.

Each Christmas, the park glistens as thousands of small white lights adorn the gazebo and trees, adding a festive touch to the downtown area.

## CARNEGIE HELPS BUILD NEW LOCAL LIBRARY

In November 1920, a \$12,500 donation from Andrew Carnegie and the New York-based Carnegie Foundation helped construct a new library at 512 E. Commercial Ave. for the people of Lowell, Cedar Creek Township, West Creek Township and Schneider.

Contributions from townspeople in the amount of \$2,000 were also used to build the new library.

The new modern facility replaced the cramped library quarters, which for decades had been located on the second floor of the Davis Store.

The downtown library continued to serve the area until December 1969, when a new building was opened at the corner of Main and Fremont streets.

On May 2, 1973, the former library officially became the new Lowell Town Hall.

Remodeled at a cost of \$60,000, the building housed all of the town offices, with the exception of the Police Department.

Staff additions, necessitated by the growth of the community, prompted the Town Council to move its municipal offices to larger quarters when the library built a new facility at 1505 E.



**The remodeled downtown library building served as the Lowell Town Hall from 1973 to 1994. It is shown above in 1985.**

**The offices of Dr. Donald W. Pulver at 501 E. Commercial Ave. was constructed as a residence in 1880.**

Commercial Ave. It opened its doors on Nov. 8, 1993.

The Town of Lowell moved to the remodeled library building in December 1994.

Micic Realty, the current occupant of the Carnegie building, purchased the property in March 1995 for \$60,000.

## DENTIST'S OFFICE WAS ONCE DRUGGIST'S HOME

On the north side of Commercial Avenue, a former residence at the corner of Fremont Street and State Route 2 now houses the offices of Dr. Donald W. Pulver.

Constructed in 1880, for many years, the frame structure was the residence of Frank L. Hunt, who operated a drug store at 418 E. Commercial Ave., the current site of South County Office Supply.

The one-story Queen Anne cottage remained a residence through the 1960s, but in later years housed the offices of a lawyer and was used as a real estate office.

Dr. Pulver opened his office of dentistry in the historic home in 1981.



## HISTORIC BACON HOUSE STANDS TEST OF TIME

The mansion located at 427 E. Commercial Ave. was built after the Civil War by Dr. Eponetus Reed Bacon, a prominent physician and Civil War veteran.

In the early years, a large windmill was located just west of the home, along with a water storage tank and hose. The water from the well saved the Bacon House from the big fire of 1898 which leveled most of the buildings on the north side of the street.

E.R. Bacon was born in New York

and traveled to Illinois in 1856. He relocated to Michigan in 1858.

Bacon began the study of medicine around 1860, and at the age of 21 years, responded to his country's call for troops at the beginning of the Civil War.

He enlisted in Company E, Second Michigan Volunteers, and served as a private with that command for three months and was discharged.

Bacon re-enlisted in the 100th Illinois Volunteer Regiment and served for three years as a sergeant, during which time he took part in the Battle of Perryville.

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# Mansion was saved from big fire

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In 1862, Bacon was a hospital steward at Bowling Green, Ky., and was later transferred to Hospital No. 14 in Nashville, where he remained on hospital duty until his discharge in 1865.

Following the war, Bacon returned to Illinois, residing in Lockport until moving to Lowell in May 1866.

He had attended lectures in Nashville, Tenn., during the war, and soon after he arrived in Lowell, engaged in the drug business while studying and practicing medicine at the same time.

Bacon attended the Chicago Medical College in 1872 and 1873, graduating on March 12, 1873.

He married the former Martha B. Sanger on June 3, 1868 and the couple moved into the two-story mansion at the corner of Commercial Avenue and Fremont Street in 1870.

Dr. Bacon was very active in local community affairs. A member of the Knights of Pythias, the Mason Lodge, the Grand Army of the Republic and the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, he was also a school director for many years, serving when the town's first school was built on Main Street.

The prominent physician took such an interest in the new school that he personally supervised the construction of the building.

Dr. Bacon's professional career was marked by continuous advancement. He had a large patronage, sometimes traveling by horse and buggy as far as Kentland to see a patient.

A director of the State National Bank in Lowell, he owned farm property in the area as well as other real estate in Chicago.

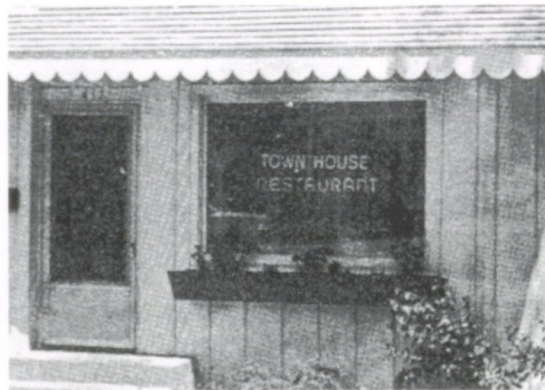
Afflicted with diabetes, Dr. Bacon was in poor health for several years before his death. A fall off of his porch which resulted in a fractured shoulder led to his death on Dec. 3, 1906 at the age of 66.

A local 1909 directory listed his widow, Martha, as still residing in the residence.

Robert L. Hein, who in more recent years lived in the home with his family, also operated his public accountant, tax auditing and real estate business out of the historic residence.



The Bacon House at 427 E. Commercial Ave. was spared in the big fire of 1898 which leveled most of the buildings on the north side of the downtown business district. Dr. E.R. Bacon constructed the striking two-story residence in 1870.



The Town House Restaurant was located at 417 E. Commercial Ave. in 1965.

The residence is currently owned by James Micun, who has made extensive renovations to the historic home. It is currently for sale.

## EYE CLINIC STARTED AS PLUMBING SHOP

The distinctive Spanish-type two-story structure at 417 E. Commercial Ave., one of the more modern buildings in the downtown business district, is the home of the Feitz Eye Clinic operated by Dr. Robert A. Feitz and his wife, Dr. Ellyn E. Feitz.

Remodeled to its current look in 1980, the building previously housed Nichols Plumbing.

For several years the medical offices of Dr. John Mirro were located there and in the 1960s, it was the lo-

cation of the Town House Restaurant.

## MASONIC LODGE A DOWNTOWN LANDMARK

Constructed in 1898 following the fire which destroyed its former building at the corner of Commercial Avenue and Clark Street, the Masonic Temple Colfax Lodge 378 originally occupied the second floor of the George Waters Building at 415 E. Commercial Ave.

The first floor of the building was originally occupied by Davis C. Driscoll, known as "Doc" to the towns' people of Lowell, who operated a drug store there until he sold his business to Logan Scritchfield.

The new owner moved the drug store to the northwest corner of Com-



Today, the Feitz Eye Clinic is located in one of the more modern downtown buildings.

mercial Avenue and Clark Street.

The Colfax Lodge eventually purchased the entire light-colored brick building and continues today as the second oldest continuous tenant in the downtown district.

The former storefront located on the first level of the building was remodeled in the late 1950s or early 1960s with a light limestone veneer.

The second story of the building features arched windows with limestone sills that allude to the Romanesque Revival style. The openings have been altered by partially bricking up the arched area and installing glass black windows.

A plaque centered between the middle and eastern bay reads: "Colfax Lodge A.F.A.M. No. 378." A second reads: "G.W. Waters 1898."







This 1950 photograph of the town's downtown business district shows how the Masonic Lodge looked prior to its remodeling in the late 1950s or early 1960s. The Colfax Lodge originally occupied the second floor of the building and a drug store was located on the main level. The lodge eventually purchased the entire building.



This 2001 photograph reflects some of the recent cosmetic changes that have been made to some of the downtown buildings.



The Masonic Lodge has been a part of the downtown business district since 1898 and continues today as the second oldest tenant on Commercial Avenue. This plaque was installed when the two-story building was constructed.



Through the efforts of the dedicated members of the Lowell Mainstreet Association and the Lowell Downtown Merchants Association, downtown visitors are greeted by seasonal flowers and benches for weary shoppers to rest.



# Shopping district survives change

*Large variety of businesses on Commercial Avenue still draws customers back to shop downtown*

The history of some of the downtown buildings is a little sketchy, but they have continued to survive the winds of change.

The one-story building which carries the addresses of 413 and 411 E. Commercial Ave. was constructed in 1904.

Like the neighboring Colfax Lodge, this building also has a rock-faced limestone veneer which was applied in the late 1950s or early 1960s.

Today, Valspar Engineering is located at 413 E. Commercial Ave.

For a time, Sara Ann's Beauty Shop was located at 411 E. Commercial Ave. Wild Thyme, an antique and gift shop, is housed there.

Doris B. Stack Accounting Services, 409 E. Commercial Ave., occupies the first floor of a two-story building that was constructed in 1899.

For a number of years, Ted's Jewelry, a fine jewelry and jewelry and watch repair shop operated by Ted

**The Lowell Home Supply Co., shown in this early 1960s photograph, was located at 407 E. Commercial Ave. for several years. Most recently, it was a gift shop.**



Miofsky, was located there.

A religious book store was located in the building's second storefront for a time as well.

The adjacent building at 407 E. Commercial Ave., which until late 2001 was the home of the Portobello gift shop and Old Town Appraisers, was the longtime location of the Lowell Home Supply Co.

Art Claussen operated the Sweet Shop at that location for a period of time too. It is currently unoccupied.

The large two-story brick building which houses three storefronts — 405, 403 and 401 E. Commercial Ave. — was constructed in 1900.

Renee's Beauty Nook was located at 405 E. Commercial Ave. for many years. More recently, it housed a doll shop and currently is the home of Artistic Mindscapes, a 1960s-type specialty shop.

The Route 2 Mini Mart is presently located at 403 E. Commercial Ave. It was previously the home of A Beat Off Music.

In the early 1920s, the Corner Barber Shop was located at 401 E. Commercial Ave.

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Wild Thyme, an antique and specialty shop located at 411 E. Commercial Ave., was once a beauty shop.



In 2002, old fashioned decorative awnings were added to some downtown buildings to enhance their historic charm.



Ted's Jewelry was located at 409 E. Commercial Ave. for many years. Today it is the home of Doris B. Stack Accounting Services. It is pictured in 1964.



The downtown business district was bustling with activity during the popular annual Sidewalk Sale sponsored by the Lowell Chamber of Commerce as shown in this 1972 photograph.



Lowell's downtown business district, looking northeast from the intersection of Clark Street and Commercial Avenue, as it appeared in 1900. The Death Hardware store was located at the northwest corner for 36 years.



After nearly four decades of housing a hardware store, the building at 319 E. Commercial Ave. was the home to three different drug stores.



The candy counter at Cassman Rexall Drugs, 319 E. Commercial Ave., was always a popular stop, as shown in this 1964 photograph.

# Historical hardware and drug stores

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 50

In the 1960s, Ty Alyea Agency Insurance was located at 401 E. Commercial Ave. and in later years, McCarthy's Barber Shop.

Until 2001, the ATA Bicycle Shop was at 401 E. Commercial Ave. It moved down State Route 2, to a much larger building at 907 E. Commercial Ave. The shop is currently the home of the Special Occasion Pastry Shop.

## DEATH HARDWARE PART OF HISTORY

The northwest corner of Commercial Avenue and Clark Street, today more commonly known as 319 E. Commercial Ave., was part of Lowell founder Melvin Halsted's original 16 lots.

For many years, it was the site of a business owned by George M. Death, a prominent hardware merchant.

Death came to Lake County in 1859, farmed for a short time and then taught school in Merrillville. He became a clerk in a dry goods store in Lowell in 1862.

Soon after, he became the owner of a tin shop on Clark Street. Death slowly increased his stock and became a partner in the hardware business with C.C. Sanger.

The partnership was dissolved in 1875 and Death moved his business

to the corner building formerly occupied by Ward Price, an early Lowell merchant.

During the big fire of 1898, Death's building was reduced to ashes. His loss totalled \$9,000.

Undaunted, he proceeded to have a large brick building erected on the same corner. Constructed by Albert Webb, the new building opened in 1899.

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# Leaders predict signs of the times

## *Rexall Drugs sign points to Chicago*

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 51

A stone on the front of the building still reads: "George M. Death 1899."

George Berg, founder of West Side Hardware, worked as a clerk for Death in the early 1900s.

A 1906 advertisement listed as the store's specialties: "High grade hardware, stoves, ranges and silverware."

Death continued to operate a hardware store at the same location until his death in 1911. He was 70 years old.

His son, G. McKinley Death, then took the reins until 1918, when he was called into the military service.

After 36 years at the same corner, the hardware store was closed and the building was rented to Logan Scritchfield, who moved his drug store from its location down the street in the first floor of the Colfax Masonic Lodge building.

In the early 1920s, sign painter Fred Viant was hired to add a new sign to the side of the drug store. The top portion of the sign was an advertisement for the Rexall drug store, but the bottom included what many today may think is a mysterious large hand with the words: "To Chicago."

While it may be a mystery today, at the time the sign was painted, U.S. 41 was only a dream and there was no bridge on Mill Street until the late 1920s.

At the time, the only route to Chicago from Lowell was through Cedar Lake to Schererville. Once there, Old Lincoln Highway could be taken on into Chicago via Torrence Avenue.

The historic sign was recreated in 1992 by modern artist Ron Malkowski of the American Outdoor Sign Co. through the efforts of the Lowell Improvement Team.

The well-known Rexall drug store had one of Lowell's most popular soda fountains, complete with marble counters, large ornamental mirrors and good old fashioned ice cream.

The building was also equipped with a hand-operated elevator for moving merchandise between the three levels.

Scritchfield continued to operate the drug store until his death in 1941. His wife, Hazel, carried on the business for a few years and then sold it to Frank Gullstrom, one of the pharmacists hired by Mrs. Scritchfield following her husband's death.

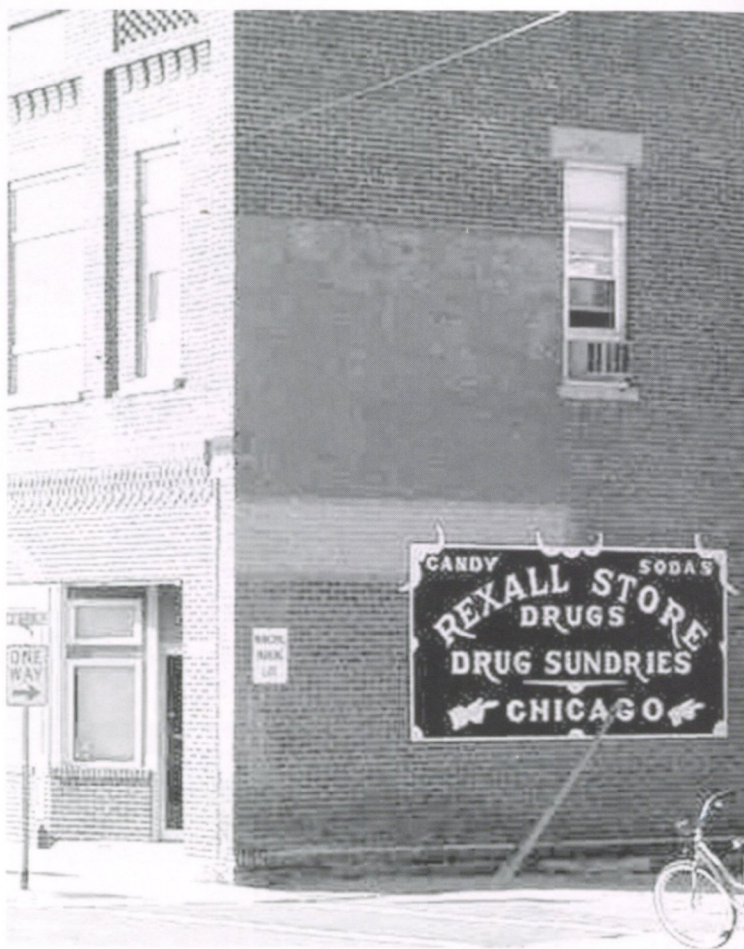
Gullstrom and his wife, Mildred, operated a successful drug store there for many years until they sold the business to Tom Cassman.

Cassman remained at the location until relocating the drug store to Mill Street. It was destroyed by a fire in 1976.

Today, the building is owned by Richard and Dawn Meadows and most recently was used as an accountant's office and a craft shop.

The first floor of the building is currently undergoing renovation.

Through the efforts of the Lowell Improvement Team, the historic 1920s Rexall Drugs sign was recreated on the side of the George M. Death building in 1992. Today, it serves as a reminder of the town's historic past.



Cassman Rexall Drugs, 319 E. Commercial Ave., was a longtime downtown fixture. Shown during the 1969 Sidewalk Sale, the business was later moved to Mill Street where it was destroyed by fire in 1976.



# Grant store upheld 76-year tradition



The Grant Brothers – Thomas and James – opened the Grant Brothers Department Store in 1900. It is shown in a 1909 photograph.



For 76 years, Grant Brothers was a part of the downtown business district. These store employees are pictured in 1963.



Today, the former Grant Brothers Department Store at 317 E. Commercial Ave. and the longtime Rexall Drugs Store at 319 E. Commercial Ave. are both owned by Richard and Dawn Meadows.

For many years the home of Grant Brothers Department Store, today the building at 317 E. Commercial Ave. is the location of Lowell Carpet and Coverings.

In the early days of Lowell, the building was included in what was known as Halsted's First Addition, platted soon after the town's founder outlined the 16 original lots in 1852.

One of the first owners of the property was Mortimer Gragg, who was a partner with Tunis Frank in the undertaking and furniture business in 1871. They occupied a large frame building with living quarters on the second floor. Dan Collins also operated a business at the site for a time.

George W. Heilig came to Lowell from Remington in 1897 to open a bakery and confectionery in the downtown building, then owned by Perry Clark. But a year later, Heilig lost his business during the big fire of 1898 that ironically occurred on his birthday.

Heilig moved his business across the street to the south side of Commercial Avenue and later constructed a new building just west of the current Stork's Nest and Lounge.

In 1900, Clark constructed the two-story brick building at 317 E. Commercial Ave. He also built a long masonry building to the north, which for many years was used as one of the town's early auto garages.

The Grant brothers – Thomas and James – rented the Commercial Avenue building from Clark in 1900 and later purchased it. Thomas Grant, one

of the town's most progressive businessmen, was elected Lake County sheriff in 1910 and served as a state senator from this area.

During his four years as Cedar Creek Township trustee, many bridges and roads were constructed. He also served on the Indiana State Board of Agriculture in the 1920s, and traveled to the state capitol each year to supervise the opening of the state fair.

James Grant was also a well-known businessman, having acquired several years of experience working for the Lynch Brothers department store before joining his brother in the new enterprise. He was also active in the community and his church.

The Grant brothers purchased the building from the Perry Clark estate in 1907, and in 1910, rented the three front rooms of the structure to the two telephone companies which served Lowell at the time.

At one time, a photography studio was located on the upper floor of the building, and a barber shop in the lower level. In the 1920s, a beauty parlor occupied the upstairs rooms, along with a dentist's office and the office of attorney Morris "Doc" Gilbert.

Byrl Grant, the son of Thomas Grant, worked with his father through the years, and along with his son, T. Robert Grant and their family, continued the operation of the store following the deaths of James Grant in 1937 and Thomas Grant in 1943. When Byrl Grant died in 1972, his son carried on the family business until 1976, when the store was closed.

Four generations of the Grant family, direct descendants of the pioneer Nichols family, took part in the operation of the well-known department store for a total of 76 years.

The building was sold in 1977 and rented out several times until it was purchased by Joseph and Ann Blandford.

The building was the home of B and G Carpet Sales before being purchased by Richard and Dawn Meadows in 1996, who now operate a carpet and flooring store there.

The Meadows have become active members of the business community and have taken great care in restoring both of their buildings to their original stature.



# Bank building is a downtown gem

In the early 1860s, William Sigler built a large frame store at the northeast corner of Wall Street and Commercial Avenue.

Mortimer Castle purchased the building in 1889 and operated a general store at that location until the fire of 1898 which leveled most of the buildings on the north side of Commercial Avenue.

Following the fire, town officials mandated that all new buildings in the downtown area be of masonry construction.

In 1900, a new brick building was built over the ashes of the old Sigler general store at 313 E. Commercial Ave. for the First National Bank of Lowell.

By 1901, the stockholders had decided to sell the bank to the State Bank of Lowell, which moved into the new building and became the State National Bank.

Officers of the State National Bank in 1909 included Albert Foster, president; John Kimmet, vice president; and H.M. Johnson, cashier.

Among the professional people with offices in the building in 1909 were Dr. J.W. Iddings, physician and surgeon; Dr. W.V. Gooder, physician; Dr. P.L. Rigg, dentist; and John W. Belshaw, lawyer.

The bank retained the same name until the 1920s, when the bank was changed back to First National Bank.

In 1926, bank officers included Albert Foster, president; J. Will Belshaw, vice president; and S.A. Brownell, cashier. Bookkeepers were Thelma Hill and Vera Minninger.

Foster, Belshaw, Brownell, George Hoevet and Logan Scritchfield served as bank directors.

In May 1930, First National Bank was absorbed by the Lowell National Bank.

For many years, an ornamental cast iron drinking fountain and horse tank was located in front of the bank building.

The sidewalk in front of the building remains a little wider on the corner today and some of the old plumbing is still visible.

While the fountain is no longer a part of the downtown business district, in 2001, the large concrete bowl was discovered in neighboring Cedar Lake.

The Cunningham family has agreed to donate it to the Three Creeks Historical Association and an anonymous benefactor has offered to replace the pedestal.

The Historical Association is currently looking for a location for the historic fountain.

In 1932, following the bank's move, the front of the building was occupied by The Toggery, a men's store owned by Fred W. Minninger.

The business was later moved to a new location on the south side of Commercial Avenue.

The office area was occupied by the law and real estate firm of Belshaw and Brannon, attorney Victor K. Roberts, attorney Edward E. "Red" Belshaw and Dr. Neil Davis, a physician.

Fred Van Nada housed his insurance office in the building and his son, Charles, opened his law office there in 1950. In the 1960s, the building was purchased by the Van Nadas.

The law office of Charles Van Nada remained there for several years, along with the showrooms of Neat Repeats, a used clothing store operated by his wife, Alice.

Today, the building houses Nellie Jayne's Cafe, a cozy restaurant and antique shop.

Despite being more than 100 years old, the building still looks very much the same as it did when it was first constructed.

The old bank vaults – one on the first floor and another on the lower level – are still in good condition.

Heavy oak doors, high ceilings, brass window frames and three chimneys indicating where fireplaces once stood add to the charm of the downtown treasure.

Limestone lintels and sills frame the windows and a legend carved in stone "BANK 1900" still hangs proudly high above busy Commercial Avenue.

Its name may have changed a few times, but the building at 313 E. Commercial Ave., constructed as a bank in 1900, continued to serve as one of the town's financial institutions for more than 30 years.



Today, the old bank building is the home of Nellie Jayne's Cafe, a cozy restaurant and antique shop. The structure continues to look much the way it did in the 1900s.



For many years, an ornamental cast iron drinking fountain and horse tank was located in front of the bank building at 313 E. Commercial Ave. In 2001, the large concrete bowl was discovered in Cedar Lake. The Three Creeks Historical Association is currently looking for a location for the historic find. It is shown in an early 1900s photograph.



# Newest building vacant

The modern-looking one-story brick and limestone building located at 307 E. Commercial Ave. was constructed in 1948.

For many years, the building was the home of the Roberts Insurance Agency, operated by Paul W. Roberts, and the law offices of Victor J. Roberts.

For the past several years, the building has remained vacant, rented out from time to time as headquarters for political candidates.

It is currently unoccupied.

## PLANNED HOTEL BECOMES OPERA HOUSE

The northeast corner of Commercial Avenue and Mill Street, at one time one of the busiest spots in the downtown area, today is home to a lush green carpet of grass.

In 1894, the first large brick building in the area was constructed at 305 E. Commercial Ave.

In its early years, the structure was known as the "Gregory Block" building. Built by John Stringer and Gene Mafus, it was originally planned as a three-story hotel.

After completing two stories, the money ran out and the partners decided to open an opera house on the second floor.

Not long after the building was completed, it was sold to J.M. Castle, owner of a general store on the south side of busy Commercial Avenue.

An early morning fire swept through the town's downtown business district on Oct. 4, 1898, destroying nearly all of the buildings located on the north side of Commercial Avenue within a three block radius.

But when the smoke had finally cleared, the "Gregory Block" building remained standing.

The brick structure had been saved by the townspeople with a bucket brigade and wet sacks and blankets placed on the roof.



For many years, the brick and limestone building at 307 E. Commercial Ave. was the home of the Roberts Insurance Agency. It is shown in a 1964 photograph.



Today, the Roberts building, a former insurance agency and law office, remains unoccupied except for its occasional use as a rental unit during election campaigns.



The large brick building at the corner of Commercial Avenue and Mill Street, for many years known as the Opera House and in later years, Fry's Department Store, was destroyed by fire on April 10, 1976. The department store had moved to a new location a year earlier.



# Fire destroys the old Opera House

Through the years, the Opera House was the place for dances, stage plays, musical concerts, church bazaars and carnivals.

For several years, it was used as a court by the Lowell High School basketball team. This was when the high school was located on Oakley Avenue in the building we now know as the Lowell Middle School.

For a time, there was a dressing room on the second floor of the nearby Grant Brothers Department Store.

Even during cold weather, the team would dress for the game at the school, run downtown to practice and then return again on the run.

In 1924, the popular Lowell High School newspaper, the *Skyrocket*, took up the cause for a new gymnasium in its eight-page tabloid.

Student Kenneth Gordon wrote: "The most important reason for having a new gym is that we have no decent place to practice. The one in the school is far too small, and the hall downtown is also an unfit place, as it has a low ceiling, and it is very unhealthy, for there is always very much dust in the air."

The big building was used for various types of businesses through the years.

The S.M. LaRue General Store

was located there for a time.

Joe Eich and Louis Berg both had pool and card rooms there, including a one-lane bowling alley that disturbed the patrons of the Lyric Theater in the next room.

Levi Gard was the proprietor of a tavern there, and for many years, the Johnson bakery ran several delivery trucks from the site. There was also a tailor shop, a resale store, Henry Schreiber's Good Housekeeping Shop and Esser's Furniture Store.

The large brick building, owned for many years by the heirs of J.M. Castle, was purchased by Earl and Marie Fry in 1954 and housed

Fry's Department Store until the firm moved into its new building on Morse Street in 1975.

The downtown building was sold to Walden Curtis.

But on April 10, 1976 – ironically, while the Annual Fireman's Ball was taking place across the street at the American Legion Post – the building was destroyed by fire.

The stock of the S&T Quality Home Center owned by Curtis was also destroyed, as well as the second story of Tom Cassman's drug store just north of the building on Mill Street.

Since that time, the corner has remained vacant.

# Car repair shop began with a wet start

The northwest corner of Commercial Avenue and Mill Street, now the site of Bennett's Auto Care, had a somewhat watery beginning.

In 1852, when Melvin Halsted founded the town, it was a deep valley where the race from the grist mill met the creek at its bend.

An old real estate map shows the 1853 wooden grist mill just 66 feet west of Mill Street at Jefferson Street, now the site of the former Palo Theater.

A wooden flume stretched from the dam on Main Street, forcing water south to operate the stones in the mill, then rushing down the race almost directly south, meeting the stream near the west edge of the auto repair shop property.

Another race from a sawmill met the stream farther north. In those early years, Main Street had no bridge to the west, and Mill Street ran only from Jefferson Street north to the creek. Halsted Street did not exist south of Main.

A few years later, however, the "county road," which was to become Indiana 2, also known as Commercial Avenue in Lowell, was developed and Mill Street was connected to the new dirt road.

According to local folklore, due to a property owner's refusal, the corner of Mill and Commercial was not



**For many years, the northwest corner of Commercial Avenue and Mill Street was the home of Adam Standard. This photograph shows cars lined up at the gas pump in 1972.**

to become a crossroad.

An old frame building stood on the corner for many years. In 1902, it housed the harness shop of Hayden and Petrie.

It was later used by Lewis Shurte as a cream station, where ice cream was made.

The business was subsequently operated by Russell Burroughs.

In the 1920s, the building was moved to the east side of the origi-

nal American Legion Post 101 building and was used as a Boy Scout cabin. It was moved again when the Legion building was expanded and was remodeled for use as a Scout hut.

To the west of the harness shop was another small frame building which housed the shoe shop operated by Walter Staff.

In 1925, a service station was constructed at the corner.

Built and owned by James

Brannock, it sat at an angle with an outside concrete pit for changing oil and lubrication service.

There was a canopy over the pumps, which were powered by a hand lever that lifted the fuel into the clear glass tank at the top of the pump, allowing gasoline to be hosed into the autos by gravity.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 57**



# Station boasts history

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James Brannock operated the Lowell Filling Station himself for several years, followed by Keith Dinwiddie, who ran the station until 1939, when he sold the business to Bernard Roy.

In 1945, the station was sold to Elmer Worley, who ran the popular station with his partner and brother-in-law, Ross Ruble, until 1946.

Two service bays were also added on the north side of the station during this time.

Another well-known Lowell businessman, James Combs, was the proprietor in 1947 and 1948, and was then followed by William Langen, now a local real estate agent, and his partner,

Pat Harper, who operated the station until 1952, when they left to start the Lowell Lumber Co. on the west side of town.

In 1952, Elmer Childress was the owner of the station and Elmer Gerner was the operator. The following year, the Henry brothers – Donald Dean Henry and Sherard “Sonny” Henry – went into business there, remaining there until 1961 when they left to start the Henry Brother Dodge dealership.

The same year, the brick building to the west of the station was torn down to make room for a new station facing Commercial Avenue.

Robert Adam, an experienced mechanic, purchased the station from the Henry brothers soon after the new building was erected in 1962.

Remodeled again in the mid-1980s, the Standard station was a beehive of activity for many years.

Adam died in February 1996, but his wife, Marlene, and son, Mike, continued to operate the business until October 1997, when it was sold to Mike Bennett, who has operated the current car care business at the location since that time.



The building today occupied by Superior Furniture and Bedding, 205 E. Commercial Ave., for many years housed automobile dealerships, including Henry Brothers Dodge, Schmelter Dodge, Schmelter Ford Sales and Wicker Ford.



In 1964, Schmelter Ford Sales, the “Friendly Ford Dealer,” operated out of a downtown Lowell showroom as well as a Cedar Lake location.



Express Auto Parts Inc. was located next door to Schmelter Ford at 201 E. Commercial Ave. in 1963. Today it is the home of Tish's Antiques.



Belei's Creative Woodworking, 140 W. Commercial Ave., began as a blacksmith shop, as shown at left, operated by William F. Tramm until his death in 1936. The property was then used as a Nash dealership until 1957. The building then became the home of Sype Pontiac, which was operated by Charles Sype and his son, Al. The dealership is shown above in a 1963 photograph.



# Historic Homes



**1** Queen Anne - 260 Burnham - c.1910 - A classic example of Queen Anne style architecture. Fish scale shingles accent the gables. The front gable has unique arches window frames with dentils. Other windows throughout have unusual vertical diamond shaped panes. Was the site of chicken farm for many years.



**2** Victorian Eclectic - 251 Clark - c.1910 - Built by J. Claude Rumsey on land originally owned by Melvin Halsted, founder of Lowell. Home features a unique front porch with a tower supported by classical columns. The steep pitched roof is reminiscent of Gothic/Victorian style architecture. Notice the cast iron finial on top of the turret.



**3** Queen Anne - 204 West Commercial - c.1899 - Attorney James William Belshaw had this home built. Typical of Queen Anne style this home is asymmetrical in roof line, floor plan, and silhouette. The home offers a variety of detail including sunburst detail on the front gable and Eastlake detail around the windows. Other distinguishing features include a turret with a mansard roof on the southeast corner and two porches separated by a bay window.



**4** Queen Anne - 231 West Commercial - c.1895 - A brick home with classic Victorian elements such as a bay window, a round turret with conical roof, and a deeply bracketed balcony area with ironwork. Lowell businessman Charles E. Nichols, who at one time owned the grain elevator, had this home built.



**5** Vernacular - 251 West Commercial - c.1900 - This L-shaped home has a hip-on-gable roof and features a front porch with a pedimented roof supported by high-style classic Ionic columns. For many years it was the home of the Babe Tanner family.



**6** Free Classic - 266 West Commercial - c.1899 - Eldon Hayhurst had the home built as a wedding present for his bride Ida. The home has a cross-gabled roof with steep pitches and a front porch supported by columns. Lunette windows with unique tear-drop shape panels accent the gables. There are modillion brackets along the cornice.





**7** Free Classic - 490 West Commercial - c.1898 - This home features a polygonal shaped tower which is reflected in the wrap-around porch. The front gable has a unique round arches window surrounded by decorative shingles. Albert Foster, ex-trustee of West Creek township, had this home built.



**9** Queen Anne - 521 East Commercial - c.1910 - This home features a half wrap-around porch with a rounded roof supported by Tuscan columns. Originally the home was the shape of a cross. Lunette windows accent the gables. Inside, the home is distinguished with a large fireplace built on a diagonal with egg- and -dart molding.



**11** Queen Anne - 520 Franklin - c.1885 - Originally this home was a farmhouse. The wrap around porch is supported by turned posts and decorated with a spindle screen. The front gable has unique double windows accented by large decorative brackets, fish scale shingles, and sunburst detail. Also, there are stained and leaded glass windows throughout the home.



**8** Italianate - 427 East Commercial - c.1870 - Civil War veteran Dr. E.R. Bacon had this home built; it became one of Lowell's showplaces. The home has a hipped roof with a widow's walk, and an original double-leaf door. It was protected from the 1898 fire by water from the hoselines from underground residential water facilities fed from the windmill tower tank. Dr. Bacon's home was the only structure to survive the fire which destroyed all the buildings on the north side of Commercial.



**10** Queen Anne - 702 East Commercial - c.1905 - Built by local builder J. Claude Rumsey. Home has four-leaf clover decorative shingles in the gables and unusual diamond-shape windows. Tuscan columns support the wrap around porch and there is a lunette window on the second floor. Lowell businessman George Hoevet was the first resident.



**12** Vernacular - 134 North Fremont - c.1901 - Believed to have been built by local builder J. Claude Rumsey. This interesting home features two round-topped arches which support the entrance and second story porch. The home is constructed with rough-faced masonry and has a hipped roof.

## Historic Homes of Lowell

The goals of the Historic Homes of Lowell Project are to stimulate interest in the history of the community through a study of the older buildings, to create and preserve a record of historic local homes for the general public and for researchers, and to foster public understanding of historic significance when remodeling older homes.

The project was begun as a result of inquiries for information on historic local residences at the library, usually by owners who wanted more information about the background of their homes to restore them to a semblance of their earlier appearance. Through research of real estate records and a public appeal for information, it was hoped that more information could be added to the library's files for future use.

In 1996 photographs were taken and a grant sought for the purpose of printing a brochure about Lowell's historic homes. Jo Cade and Richard C. Schmal were a part of the research committee, while Don Cade produced the photographs. The library staff worked many hours, with the brochure written by Doreen Anglis and designed by Amber Wietbrock.

Just 24 homes were picked carefully from a list of the older homes in town; criteria mandated that all were to be within the town limits, constructed before 1910, and with an appearance similar to the original building. Unique architectural features and the availability of historical information were important factors in the difficult choices.

The Historic Homes project was funded through an Indiana Heritage Research grant, a joint effort of the Indiana Humanities Council and the Indiana Historical Society, and was co-sponsored by the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana. The grant was in the amount of \$2,500, with in-kind costs of \$8,668.

Karen Kiemnec of the Northern Regional Office of HLF supplied much valuable information for the project.

Information about the featured homes or any of Lowell's older houses, how to research your home, or how to restore a historic home is available at the Lowell Public Library.



# Architectural Styles

## Federal (1810 – 1845)

Flat, undecorated wall surfaces of local materials, usually brick or wood weatherboard. Rectangular in shape. Low-pitched gabled roof. End chimneys. Large, Multi-paned windows. Fanlight and narrow sidelights at entrance. Most common along navigable waterways and early transportation routes.

## Free Classic

A later, more formal variation of the Queen Anne style; bridge to colonial. Usually does not have a tower or fishscales, but may include a Palladian window in the gable, and a porch with classic columns.

## Eclectic

In most cases, incorporates elements the designer liked from a particular style. Unlike the mixture or styles that occurred in the Victorian period, this movement emphasizes relatively pure copies of the various styles.

## Italianate (1855 – 1890)

Predominate style in Indiana during the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, derived from Italian villas. Vertical composition. Tall, narrow, slightly arched windows with segmental or round-arched hoods. Low-pitched hipped roof supported by decorative brackets and often topped with a widow's walk.

## Queen Anne (1885 – 1905)

Combines medieval and classical elements to create the most exuberant of 19<sup>th</sup> Century styles. Asymmetrical composition, with towers, turrets, tall chimneys, bay windows, projecting pavilions, spindled porches and balconies. Contrasting materials on wall surfaces. Stained-glass windows.

## Vernacular

Architecture which tends to reiterate local forms, adapting them to changing conditions over a period of time. For economy, a compact plan is the rule.



- 13** Eclectic - 317 South Freemont - c.1885 - John A. Kimmet, who was vice president of the State National Bank in Lowell and owned and operated a grist mill, had this home built. The main section of the home features Greek Revival elements such as the temple front and the transom above the door. Queen Anne-style turned supports and spindlework ornamentation accent the two front porches.



- 15** Queen Anne - 140 Liberty - c.1905 - Home originally stood on the corner of Washington and Liberty. Home features an unusual gabled dormer which forms the foot for the balcony. The other front gable has sunburst detail and decorative shingles. Classical columns support the front porch which is accented with carved balustrades.



- 17** Federal/I-House - 207 East Main - c.1849 - Built by Melvin Halsted, this is the oldest brick home in Lake County and is typical of homes built in Indiana, Illinois and Iowa (I-House) at that time. William Buckley helped build the home. Completely symmetrical, the home was made of bricks from Halsted's own brickyard, located west of his house. Presently the home is owned by the Three Creeks Historical Association and is a private dwelling.



- 14** Vernacular - 1244 Harrison - c.1900 - The home has a bay window and cornice molding above the windows. Home and surrounding acreage was at one time the Silver Fox Farm (established c.1926). The fox pens, which boasted five pair of prize silver fox, were located in the lot just east of the house. Fox were bred and groomed for the quality of furs that would be sold to the New York Fur Market.



- 16** Queen Anne - 626 Lincoln - c.1900 - Another moved house; formerly at the corner of Union and East Commercial (the present site of NBD Bank). Built by Lake County pioneer John Hack. Home has a corner porch with decorative spindle screen and brackets. Bay windows with diamond-shaped decorative applique. Decorative fish scale shingles and sunburst detail accent the gables.



- 18** Vernacular - 243 Main Street - c.1893 - This two story brick home has a brick sidewalk along the edge of the street. The home has Queen Anne style details and the windows have rough stone lintel sills.





**19** Queen Anne - 709 Michigan - c.1907 - Local builder J. Claude Rumsey built this home and lived here in 1901, the same year the home was pictured in an ad in "Souvenir of Lake County" publication. The home features a unique "keyhole" window and an unusual short tower. The wrap around porch is supported by columnettes. The round arched front entry is supported by cluster columns.



**21** Queen Anne/Eclectic - 248 Viant - c.1889 - This home was moved in 1968 from the southwest corner of Commercial and Union Street to Viant Street. When at the original site, in 1925, the home was purchased by the Lowell Methodist Church and served as a parsonage. The home is distinguished by its unique gambrel roof and round arch post which rests on the cornice return.



**23** Eclectic - 228 West Main - c.1989 - Once the home of Julia Buckley Feeley, and 1849 pioneer of the Buckley Homestead. The home is distinguished by a square tower with mansard-style roof. There are segmented arched windows on the first floor and decorative shingles on the gables.



**20** Vernacular - 115 North Nichols - c.1895 - Built by William Belshaw. This brick home has a cross gabled roof and a front porch which is supported by Queen Anne carved posts. Segmented arches above the windows are reflected in the porch.



**22** Vernacular - 224 West Washington - c.1905 - Home features a two-story bay window divided by decorative shingles. The porch is accented with turned posts and spindles.



**24** Vernacular - 232 West Washington - c.1905 - Home has stick-style elements which are prominent in the gables. Queen Anne-style elements include bay windows, sunburst detail, fish scale shingles, and decorative diamond-shape applique around the windows.

## Features

### Transom

a horizontal dividing piece of wood or stone across the top of a window or door

### Gambrel Roof

a ridged roof with two slopes on each side, the lower slope having the steeper pitch.

### Turret

a small ornamented tower or tower-shaped projection on a building

### Mansard Roof

a roof having two slopes on all four sides, with the lower slope almost vertical and the upper almost horizontal

### Dentils

one of a series of small rectangular blocks forming a molding or projecting beneath a cornice

### Modillions

blocklike brackets

### Cornice

a horizontal, usually molded projection that crowns or completes a building or wall

### Gable

the vertical triangular piece of wall at the end of a ridged roof, from the level of the eaves to the summit

### Widow's Walk

a railed, rooftop platform on a dwelling often used as a lookout for incoming ships on coastal houses

### Lunette Window

a crescent or semi-circular shaped window

Reprinted directly from the 1996 *Historic Homes of Lowell* brochure.

Original sources:

*A Field Guide to American Architecture*, Carole Rifkin

*On the Street Where You Live*, pamphlet by Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana



# War Monuments in Lowell

## *Marshall chairs committee to fund project to remember veterans*

The dedication of the Three Creeks Monument in downtown Lowell took place on a rainy Friday, June 9, 1905, about three years after the original plans were made. Many fundraisers were initiated by a committee headed by H.H. Ragon, editor of *The Lowell Tribune* and president of the Monument Association. In all, \$3,000 was collected for the memorial.

Clark Bros. Monument Co. of Wabash was given the contract and asked to build one of the finest memorials of the time. Built of the best Barre granite, the lower base is nine foot square and one foot, ten inches high; the next is six feet by two, and the third is four feet square by ten inches high. The die for the names is seven feet in height, with a plinth of eight inches, followed by an upper base thirty two inches square and forty nine inches high. The statue of the soldier so proudly standing on top is five feet, five inches, and weighing forty five tons.

The monument honors veterans of four wars who came from the Three Creeks townships: the War of 1812, the Mexican War, the Civil War, and the Spanish-American War. The names of those from Eagle Creek Township were placed upon the east face, those from Cedar Creek Township on the north, and those from West Creek Township on the west. The south side lists the names of those veterans who lived or were buried in the area at the time of the dedication, but who did not enter the service from the three townships.

More than four thousand people came to Lowell for the dedication ceremonies, despite the rainy weather. They came from Rensselaer, Chicago, Chicago Hts., and from all parts of Lake and Porter Counties.

The visitors were escorted by the popular M.C. Wiley Band, with the parade including thirty members of the John Wheeler Post – the Grand Army of the Republic of Crown Point, and twenty members of the W.R.C. (Women's Relief Corps), the Auxiliary of the G.A.R., founded in 1883.

The Grand Army of the Republic was organized at Decatur, Ill., Apr. 6, 1866, and was open to all veterans who fought in the Civil War for the

Union. Rensselaer sent thirty members from G.A.R. Post No. 84, and many members of their W.R.C.

One hundred and fifty old soldiers also fell into the procession to escort Indiana Gov. J. Frank Hanley, Dept. of Indiana Commander Lucas of the G.A.R., and Rev. David Handley of Shadeland.

Because of the bad weather, part of the program was held in the Old Opera House, a downtown building built just before 1900 and destroyed in a fire in 1976. Music by the N.C. Wiley Band opened the program, followed with an invocation by Rev. Handley.

Ragon, a former captain in the Civil War and a member of the G.A.R., gave the history of the monument from the start of the fund drive. He was followed by a duet sung by Daisy Dinwiddie and Blanche Babcock, and Flora Brown McGill, who sang the "Star-Spangled Banner."

Ragon introduced the G.A.R. commander, who "entertained his audience in a manner pleasing and instructive." His patriotic speech lasted nearly an hour.

The crowd then marched to the public square (now Senior Citizens Park) for the dedication. Rose Kimmet was chosen to draw the cord that held the flag in place over the monument.

Ragon then presented the memorial to the trustees of Eagle Creek, Cedar Creek and West Creek Townships, and to their successors in office. Commander Lucas, assisted by the veterans of Burnham Post G.A.R. of Lowell, proceeded with the dedication.

The following is from the June 9, 1905, *Lowell Tribune*: "Governor Hanley gave a thirty-minute address, so impressive that his vast audience listened attentively though they were standing in mud and slush while being wet through by the falling rain. He paid a most beautiful tribute to Mrs. Abigail Cutler, the nurse whose name appears on the monument."

After the Governor's speech, Commander Lucas sang "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah" with the audience joining in the chorus. Rev. John Bruce (1824-1914) then gave the benediction, and the joyful, though soaked



crowd returned to their homes.

The monument was originally planned for four hundred names, though now its four sides display the names of 503 men and one woman, honored for their part in one of the four wars of the past century.

In 1972 a fine bronze plaque was placed on the north face of the large monument in the park by the Lowell Womens Club with the following inscription: "Three Creeks Monument, dedicated 1905 in honor of those who served in the Civil, Mexican and Spanish-American Wars and the War of 1812, by the Women of Tri-Creek, Lowell Women's Club, 1972."

The long-winded governor was J. Frank Hanley, the 26th governor of Indiana, who was born in Illinois in 1873 and came to Indiana with his family in 1879, settling at Williamsport on the Wabash River, near Lafayette. A school teacher, he became a lawyer in 1889 and was elected to the legislature that same year. He served in Congress from 1895 to 1897, and in 1916 ran for President of the United States on the Prohibition Party platform. He died in a car-train accident at the age of 57 in 1920.

On May 1, 1988, another dedica-

tion of a monument is being planned, for the new veterans' memorial erected on East Commercial Ave. in Lowell, near the Lowell Fire Station. Five stones are placed on a raised platform, neatly landscaped and topped by three flagpoles.

The center stone reads: "Dedicated to the men and women who served in the armed forces and these who have given their lives for our country; By Citizens of West, Cedar and Eagle Creek Townships; dedicated May 1, 1988."

Four stones honor the dead of World War One, World War Two, the Korean and Vietnam Conflicts. Like the dedication of 1905, many dignitaries and veteran's groups are expected to attend the ceremonies of 1988, and a large parade is being planned for the occasion.

The monument project, which began in 1986, was planned and engineered by the Lowell Hoosier Celebration '88 Committee, chaired by Town Trustee William Marshall, with the cooperation of the people of the Three Creeks area, who contributed time and money so that the veterans of the four wars of this century will not be forgotten.







The Chicago Automobile Clubs Grand Stand, Viaduct in distance. Press and Judges stand. The start and finish of the two great races, Indiana Trophy and Cobe Cup.

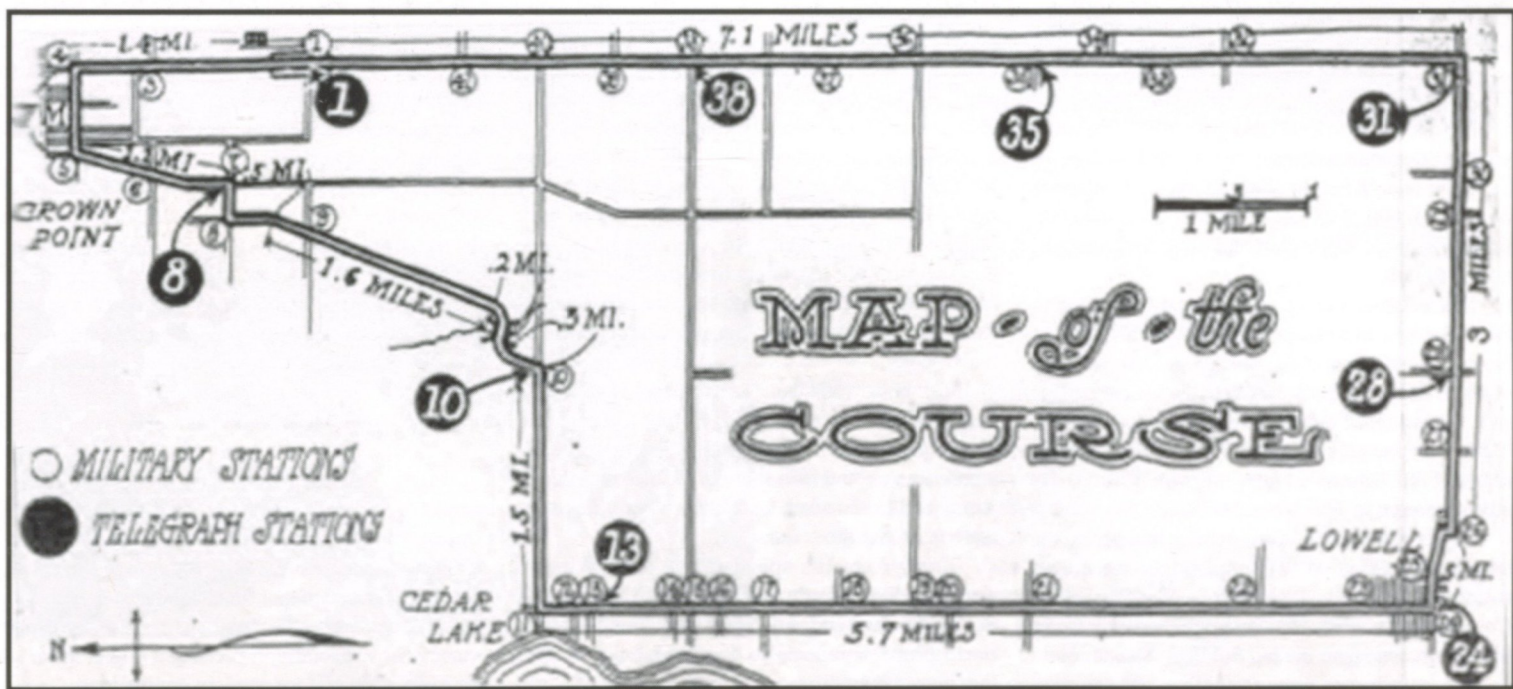


North West Corner with sharp turn into South Court street or "Ruffle Shirt Hill", one of Crown Point's best residence streets.



# The Cobe Cup Auto Race of 1909

This map shows the route of the 1909 Cobe Trophy Race, a total of 23.37 miles from Crown Point to Cedar Lake and on to Lowell, then back to Crown Point via Indiana 55, the old "Nine-Mile-Stretch," so named at the time of the big race. National Guard soldiers were stationed at over 40 spots along the route. Nine telegraph stations were well-spaced along the raceway and relayed news about the race to spectators in the grandstands. Two corners shown on the east side of Lowell are now the Lowell cemetery road.





# AUTOMOBILE RACES

## JUNE 18 - 19, 1909

We have by far the best location and point of view on the whole course at Mr. Lew Chapman's premises on North Clark street, Lowell, Indiana. Only two blocks north of Lowell National Bank, and three blocks from Monon depot on a high embankment, where there will be no possible danger of racing machines running into stand and where racers can be seen for Two Miles on the fastest piece of road on the course. You will have no trouble to go and come from stand at any time during race.



Zartman's Busses  
and other conveyances will meet all trains on the  
C. I. & S. Ry.  
AT NORTH HAYDEN  
to convey you to LOWELL and the grandstand.  
Refreshments on Ground  
Schma's Hotel is the place to eat; only short distance from stand.

**Grandstand Tickets \$2.00 per day**

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR RESERVED SEAT TICKETS ADDRESS

**Lowell Grandstand Co.,**

Lowell, Indiana

Tickets also on sale at Schmal's Hotel

Reference—LOWELL NATIONAL BANK

# Indy 500 forerunner 1909 Cope Cup attracted 50,000

*Numbers lower than anticipated  
as fear of poor accommodations  
leave grandstands nearly empty*

Back in 1908 Ira Cobe, president of the Chicago Auto Club, wanted to prove that the Midwest could promote stock car races that could compare with those in other parts of the country. Plans took shape for the big race of 1909, an event that became the forerunner of the Indianapolis 500 Race.

Harold Wheeler of Crown Point was among those who planned the route from Crown Point to Cedar Lake, and on to Lowell, then returning to Crown Point, a route touching few towns, no railroad crossings, with tarred, stone roads.

Cobe offered an elaborate trophy bearing his name, and cars were to be of the same type sold to the public.

There were actually two races held the weekend of June 18 and 19, 1909, with the first race for the Indiana Trophy. The winner, Joe Matson, drove his Chalmers-Detroit racer the 10 laps in four hours, 31 minutes, and 21 seconds, averaging 52.2 miles per hour.

A huge grandstand was built in Crown Point on the "Nine Mile Stretch," described by Rev. Timothy Ball as follows in his report of 1909: "The stand was an immense structure, in length 864 feet, in depth 60 feet, in height about 25 feet. The number of seats 10,000. Amount of lumber used, 400,000 feet. 59 kegs of nails. Contract price for construction, \$10,000."

Grandstands were also built near Creston, Cedar Lake and in at least two sites in the town of Lowell. One location on North Clark St. was advertised as "safe from cars and the racers can be seen for two miles on the fastest part of the course." Tickets for the grandstand on Clark Street were on sale at Fred Schmal's Hotel, according to an old advertisement in *The Lowell Tribune*.

To keep the public from getting injured by the speeding racers, two walking bridges were constructed in downtown Lowell—one over Clark St. at Commercial Avenue, and another arched over Commercial Avenue near the big Soldiers' Monument.

An even larger viaduct for horses was constructed over the raceway at the corner of Main Street and Clark Street.

The racers roared down from Cedar Lake on what is now Morse Street and sped down Clark Street because there was no bridge over Cedar Creek on Mill Street. But a speed of only eight miles was recommended at the Clark Street intersection turning onto Commercial Avenue, where a barricade of straw bales was piled up in front of the business places on the south side of Commercial, including the Ed Pixley Jewelry Store.

The daily papers advertised in advance that immense crowds would come and would not be accommodated at any price. They went so far as to picture hungry, crying children and people sleeping on the ground. According to editor Ragon of *The Lowell Tribune*, those terrible stories kept much of the public away.

The stories about the actual number of spectators present for the weekend vary, but most agree with Mr. Ragon, who estimated that less than 50,000 persons attended both days. One report: "All the grandstands in Lowell were crowded—with emptiness."

The Chicago Automobile Club went into debt for \$25,000, while folks who made hundreds of sandwiches and other refreshments, had to bury their unsold goods, which were spoiling in the June heat. Most of the spectators brought their own picnic lunches and did not pay to sit in the many grandstands because there was plenty of room along the race route.

Former Lowell businessman Harold Love, now deceased, told the Old Timer that as a young lad, he was privileged to ride in Louis Strang's racer on a practice run and said that his mother was not as happy as he was when he told her about the exciting trip on the race course.

Strang kept his speed machine at William Tramm's blacksmith shop on West Commercial during the weekend. Another Lowell businessman, Earle "Babe" Tanner, also deceased, once recalled that he watched the races from the corner of Commercial Ave. and Oak Street on the east side of town, and that he really enjoyed it, even though there was quite a wait between the racers. He was impressed by the many soldiers who were on guard and directing traffic all along the race course.

A notice was published in *The Lowell Tribune*: "Owing to the immense crowd of people and autos, it will be found necessary to blindfold horses coming in from the country, especially when crossing the viaducts." All people were warned to stay off the streets.

Fred Castle advertised hitching posts for 150 horse teams at Castle Park (now VFW grounds) at 35¢ a team.

On June 19, 1909, the longer Cobe Trophy Race was on with the following entrants: A. Dennison driving a 40 horsepower Knox; W. Bouroque in a 48 HP Knox; G. Robertson in a 40 HP Locomobile; J. Florida driving a 40 HP Locomobile; E.A. Hearne with a 42 HP Fiat; L. Strang driving a 32 HP Buick; Louis Chevrolet with a 32 HP Buick; R. Burman also in a 32 HP Buick; H. Lytle in a 53 HP Apperson; M. J. Seymour driving a 53 HP Apperson; B. Miller with a Stoddard-Dayton 44 HP; C.A. Engelbeck driving a Stoddard-Dayton 44 HP.

The twelve cars were to drive 17 laps for a total of 395.66 miles. When all the smoke and dust cleared at the end of the race, Louis Chevrolet of France was the winner in his 32 horsepower Buick, with an average speed of 49.26 miles per hour, all in 8 hours, 1 minute and 39 seconds. The fastest mile was driven at nearly 88 miles per hour.

## THE WINNING CAR

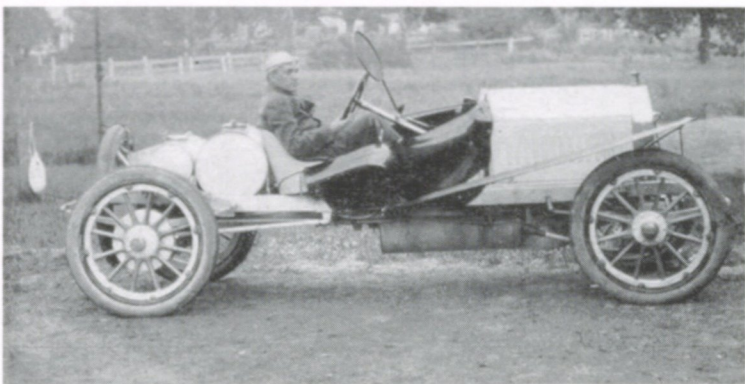
Many of the Lowell townspeople were glad to get rid of the speeding drivers with all the dust and smoke, but those involved in grandstands and refreshment sales were very disappointed because, for them, the end meant financial disaster. But even with those losses, the race was called somewhat successful, especially in proving a newer mode of transportation and for modern engineering.







Another view of the North West Corner where track runs full length of "Ruffle Shirt Hill" and leaves Crown Point for Lowell via Cedar Lake to West Leg.



"Louis Strang" the man with a nerve of steel: one of America's most famous race drivers who is driving the Buick Car in both races.



"Hotel Binyon" at Cedar Lake where the Stoddard-Dayton race cars and their drivers are being cared for.

Barbara and Harry Schwimmer of Lowell won the "Panache Award" for their 1973 Excaliber entry in the Cobe Cup Car Cruise.



Linda and Michael Budack of Crown Point won the Antique Division "Best of Show" for their 1935 Chevy Coupe.

## 2002 Cobe Cup Cruise Re-enactment

The Lowell Chamber of Commerce joined forces with the Greater Crown Point Chamber of Commerce on May 26 for the annual Cobe Cup Celebration.

The re-enactment of the historic 1909 Cobe Cup race which traveled through Crown Point and Lowell began at 1 p.m. at the Lake County Fairgrounds.

The first 150 cars registered received dash plaques, certificates of participation, flags and goodie bags. Traditionally, only pre-1979 era cars, trucks and motorcycles were

allowed to participate in the event, however, this year the owners of any year Corvette, Volkswagen and PT Cruiser were invited to join in the fun for only a \$5 entry fee.

The 23-mile cruise concluded in Lowell, where the Lowell Chamber of Commerce hosted a pit stop in the parking lot of Lowell American Legion Post 101 on Commercial Ave.

Certificates and dash plaques were presented in Lowell, as well as the awards for the best entries in each category.



# Murrell Belanger: Lowell's Representative in Memorial Day "500"

Lowell Tribune – May 24, 1951

Murrell Belanger's "Belanger Special" is still one of the top qualifiers in the Indianapolis "500" but lost the speed record for 4-cylinder racers when Walt Faulkner, in an Agajanian-Grant Piston Special, set a new track record for all cars by qualifying for the big race with a speed of 136.872 miles per hour last Saturday.

Lee Wallard qualified the local entry a week ago Saturday with 135.039 the same day that Duke Nalon set the high mark for big cars with 136.498 in a Novi Special. How-

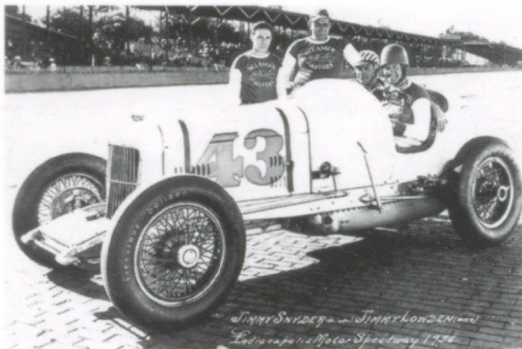
ever, the Belanger Special retains its front row position for the race next Wednesday.

The final starters will be picked this weekend to bring the field of 33 and some of those who have already made the grade will no doubt be bumped by the late-comers.

Track experts still consider the Belanger Special one of the favorites and if it is able to finish, should end up in one of the lead spots.

A large following of Lowell fans will be on hand to see the local entry make its bid for "fame and fortune."

Jimmy Snyder sits in Belanger's first car to qualify for the 500 in 1936 at 111.291, started 18th, finished 29th, out after 38 laps with a broken clutch. Snyder was born in Chicago, moved to Hammond, and then moved to a farm north of Lowell.



After Wallard's "500" win, Tiny Worley, one of the winning mechanics, looks on as Lee Wallard sits on 99 with Tony Bettenhausen, who won the 1951 National Championship with 99.

Lee Wallard stands in the seat of 99 with Borg-Warner trophy movie actress Loretta Young and his wife. Murrell Belanger takes a drink of milk on the left of the photo.

Wallard sits in 99 with car owner Murrell Belanger in front of the old pakota.







# Belanger Special Wins 1951 Indianapolis "500"

*Lowell Tribune – May 31, 1951*

The "fame and fortune" plus an added shot of glory which Murrell Belanger, local implement dealer and owner of the Crown Point Chrysler-Plymouth Sales, has been competing for in the big race of the year, finally came his way after several years of trying.

Yesterday his Belanger Special, powered with a 4-cylinder Meyer and Drake Offenhauser motor, with Lee Wallard of Altamont, N.Y. at the wheel, set a terrific pace in the Indianapolis "500" to win the annual classic with the record-smashing average of 126.244 miles per hour. The old mark of slightly over 124 mph was set last year when the race was stopped at the end of 345 miles.

Only eight of the starting field of 33 cars were able to finish the grueling grind and none of the final winners were heavy favorites to cop the big prize.

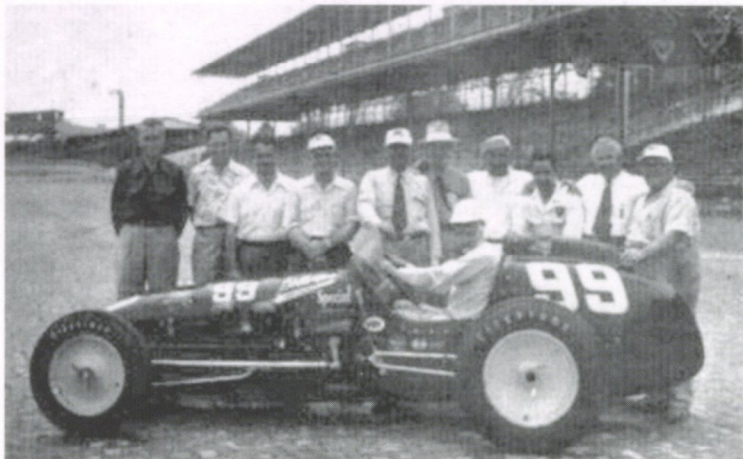
Wallard, a veteran driver at 40, became eligible for the thrilling drive down "Victory Lane" in his fourth attempt in the "500" to join the select circle of winners. He lost the lead only for a short time in the race and finished far ahead of the second place winner.

This year's winner received the major share of Speedway and accessory awards totalling over \$200,000 and in addition was given the new Chrysler convertible pace car and presented the Borg-Warner trophy by

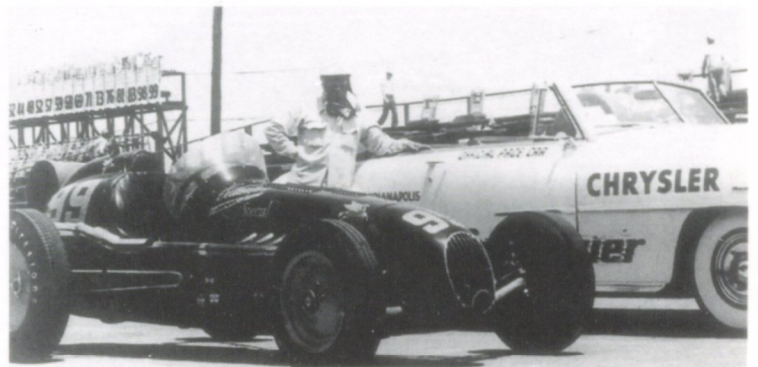
movie star Loretta Young in traditional ceremonies in "Victory Lane" immediately after the race.

Also "up in the clouds" with Owner Belanger and his driver are the pit crew – Harold Brownell, George Salih, "Frenchy" Sirois and Howard Meeker, who spent long hours in the second floor workshop of the Belanger Farm Equipment Co. on Mill St., preparing No. 99 for its record-breaking victory.

Unlike the fans of old Mudville when the mighty Casey struck out, racing enthusiasts in Lowell and the entire county are joining in the chorus of cheers for the champion of the world's most publicized sporting event.



**Belanger's Famous 99, pictured with crew, is the first world champion racer from Lowell.**



**Lee Wallard stands between 99 and the pace car given to the winner.**



**Wallard and 99 at the full north straightaway.**



## 1951 Record of No. 99

Indianapolis, IN .....	500 mile .....	1st
Milwaukee, WI .....	100 mile .....	1st
Langhorne, PA .....	100 mile .....	1st
Darlington, SC .....	100 mile .....	1st
Milwaukee, WI .....	200 mile .....	10th
Springfield, IL .....	100 mile .....	1st
DuQuoin, IL .....	100 mile .....	1st
DuQuoin, IL .....	100 mile .....	1st
Syracuse, NY .....	100 mile .....	1st
Detroit, MI .....	100 mile .....	4th
Denver, CO .....	100 mile .....	1st
San Jose, CA .....	100 mile .....	1st
Phoenix, AZ .....	100 mile .....	13th
Bay Meadows, CA .....	150 mile .....	2nd

Top: Parade lap on north short straightaway – 99 in middle front row.

Bottom: Duane Carter sits in No. 1 built exactly the same as No. 99 for the 1952 "500". It qualified 135.522, started 6th, finished 4th at 125.259. No. 99 crashed and did not qualify.

## Belanger enters Indianapolis "500"

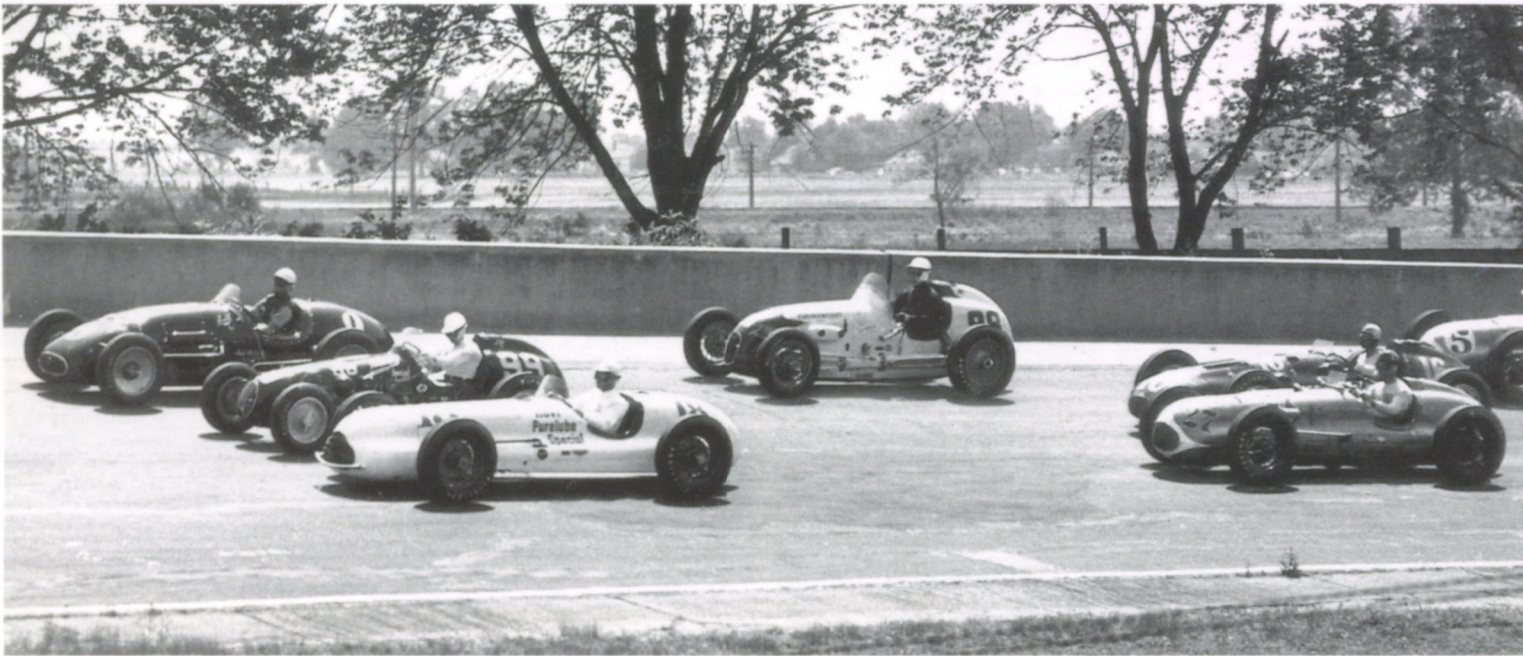
*Lowell Tribune* – April 28, 1955

Murrell Belanger, Lowell and Crown Point businessman and sportsman, who has had cars in Indianapolis "500" races since the late '30s has again entered the world famous Memorial Day Event.

Belanger has won only once in all those years, in 1951, however, his cars have finished in the money many times.

Art Cross of LaPorte will drive this year's entry, No. 99, a Belanger special, marking his third try for the winner's trophy in the big race.

No. 99 is now in California, but will arrive here next week to be finished up before the time trials start May 14.



## Belanger's No. 99 Ready for Indianapolis Time Trials

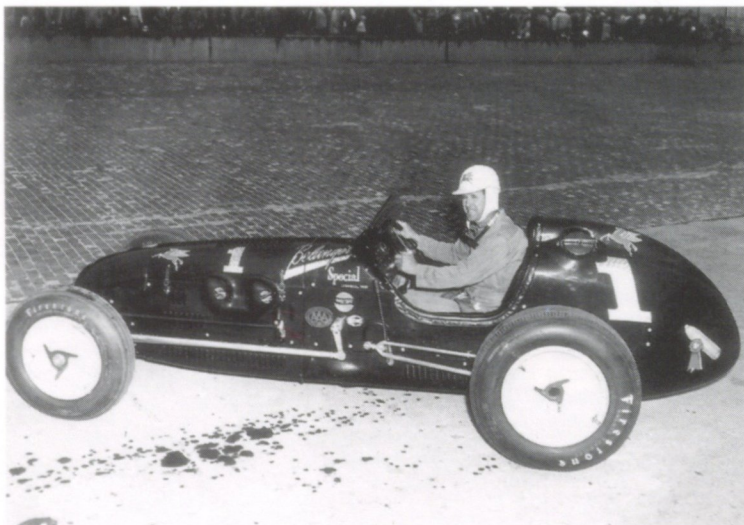
*Lowell Tribune* – May 12, 1955

"Frenchy" Sirois, mechanic, is sits behind the wheel of Murrell Belanger's brand new No. 99 which was completed last Friday well ahead of the May 14 deadline for the Indianapolis "500" time trials.

"Tiny" Worley, head mechanic looks on with approval at another job well done. Assembling and testing of the new racer was done in the special shop on the second floor of the Belanger Farm Equipment Co. on Mill street.

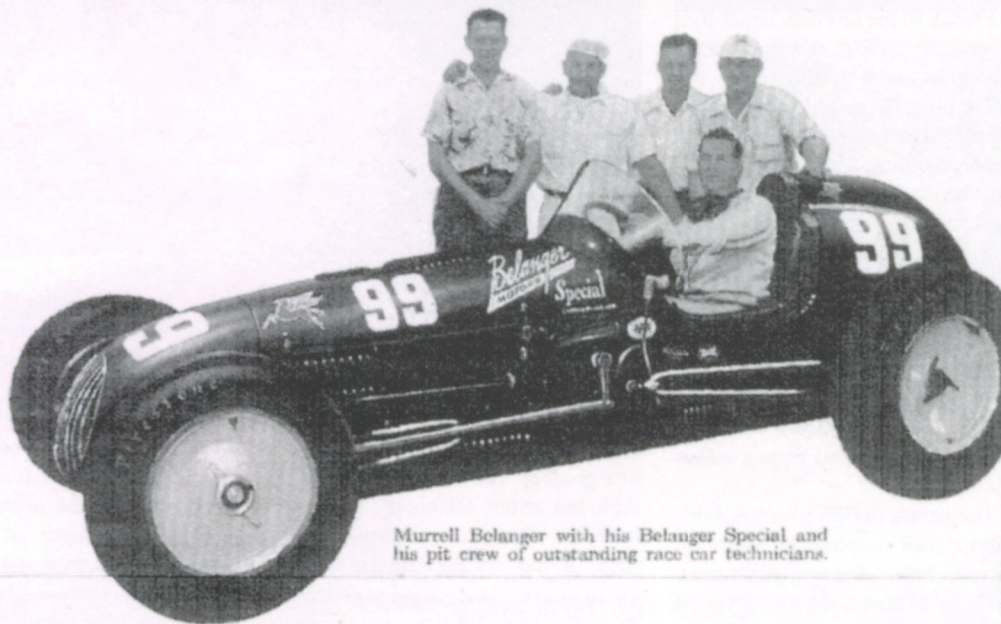
Art Cross of LaPorte, who will drive this year's entry in the big event, will be making his third start on the Indianapolis oval. In a preliminary warmup this week the new car was clocked at better than 139 mph and it was pronounced fit for a possible try at qualifying this Saturday.

Owner Belanger and his entire crew of mechanics and pit men will be on hand to aid Driver Cross in the attempt.





# Belanger 99...1951's "Winningest" Car Used Champions Exclusively!



Murrell Belanger with his Belanger Special and his pit crew of outstanding race car technicians.



Owner of 1951's "winningest" car, Mr. Murrell Belanger.



Lee Wallard, winner of the 1951 Indianapolis Race at the record breaking speed of 126.244 m.p.h. average.



Tony Bettenhausen, 1951 AAA Champion Race Driver, with eight wins and two seconds out of fifteen championship events.



Murrell Belanger, owner of the most sensational racing car in decades, the "Baby Belanger No. 99 Special" pays this glowing tribute to Champion Spark Plugs:

*"When Lee Wallard won the 1951 Indianapolis 500-mile race at the record breaking speed of 126.244 miles per hour average, it was the first time in the history of the race that it had ever been run under four hours. That's a terrific test of the car, engine, tires, brakes and spark plugs! After Wallard's unfortunate injury, alert Tony Bettenhausen took over. He drove this car in a sensational manner, winning eight of the remaining races and bringing the total for the Belanger Special to nine wins out of the fifteen AAA National Championship events. Never before has one car won so many events in a single season. Tony, my head mechanic and myself really know from experience the meaning of that word, dependability. It's a synonym for Champion Spark Plugs. I can tell you as the owner of 1951's 'winningest' car that the winning ways of Champion Spark Plugs are no mere happenstance—they're built to live up to their name, and they do. In my book there's only one spark plug and its name is Champion."*

Murrell Belanger

## FOLLOW THE EXPERTS

DEMAND CHAMPION SPARK PLUGS FOR YOUR CAR

CHAMPION SPARK PLUG COMPANY, TOLEDO 1, OHIO



# Labor Day Memories at Lowell

*Routes and activities change while patriotic pride continues*

The World War I veterans of American Legion Post #101 pioneered the Lowell Labor Day Celebration soon after their return to civilian life. From The Lowell Tribune of Sept. 2, 1920: "Next Monday will be the big time in Lowell when the American Legion boys of Post 101 give their annual Homecoming and Field Day Celebration. The program will keep the visitors entertained from the time they get here in the morning."

The Rensselaer Brass Band led the parade down Commercial Avenue, followed by buggies, automobiles and marchers. A band concert, a speech by Congressman Will R. Wood, a baseball game, barrel and pony races were on the program.

Picnic lunches filled the woods at Oakland Park, while sandwiches prepared by mothers of the veterans were offered for sale. With no lights in the park, the evening program was a band concert downtown, followed by a dance in the Opera House at the corner of Mill and Commercial (burned down in 1976 as Fry's Dept. Store).

On Labor Day 1921, the Milford Ill. Brass Band led the parade to the park, where the crowd listened to a long speech by Edward Jackson, then Secretary of State in Indiana. Vaudeville, concerts, ball games, dancing and boxing followed the talk. It was the first year that an automobile was given away. The day ended with fireworks.

The Labor Day program of 1924 featured a similar style, with the addition of the playoffs for the Northwest Indiana Amateur Baseball Championship, as well as an exciting

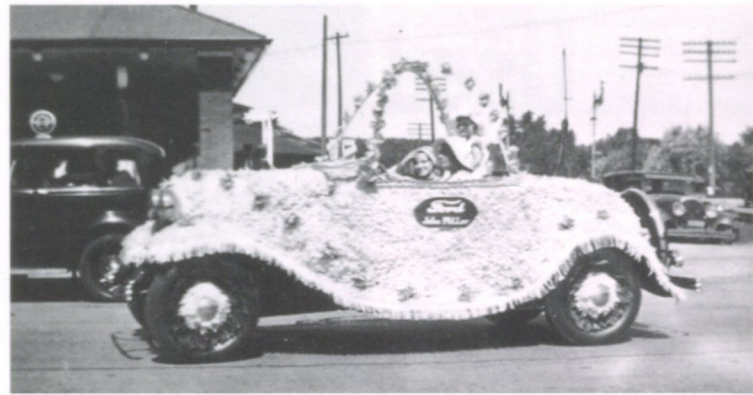
"aerial circus." Rainbow flyer Arthur Chester and Morton French were to put on aerial fireworks; at about 4:30 p.m. the two men were in a World War I "Jenny" airplane dropping bombs. As French lit the last one, larger than the rest, it stuck in the firing tube, blew up and injured both men.

The pilot was able to land the plane near the present Lutheran Church with a perfect landing. Morton was rushed to the hospital, but died that evening. Chester survived. Morton had made a parachute jump at the Lake County Fair two weeks before.

Bill Peterson, current president of the Three Creeks Historical Association, said everyone in the area knew exactly when the parade started on Labor Day morning, since a very loud aerial bomb was fired from a make-shift mortar.

The parade followed several different routes through the years. In 1925 the lineup was on Mill Street, north to Main, east on Main to Burnham, then to Commercial Avenue, west to Liberty Street on the way to the park. For some years the parade began on West Commercial to Burnham Avenue, north on Burnham to Main Street, west to Mill Street, then south to Commercial where, as the parade became longer, marchers were forced to wait as the rear of the parade went east on the avenue.

In 1952, when six parades were featured in four days during the Centennial Celebration, the starting point was changed to the Lowell Cemetery area, with Viant Street and Prairie Street also used as part of the lineup



areas. The big parade each morning went west on Commercial Avenue, west on Washington Street to Liberty Street, back to Commercial Avenue, and east to Globe Drive (Charlevoix Street in 1952) on the way to the festival grounds. The Centennial parades included about 60 horses pulling floats or with riders in period costumes. Remember the Fuller brothers, Paul and Dick, who for years proudly drove the miniature Caterpillar tractor sponsored by Hardings, Inc.?

A few may remember how the Labor Day Committee confused the Lake County Sheriff one year. It seems the new officer was intent on wiping out any kind of gambling, even from booths with "wheels." Fire trucks were stationed at both gates of Oakland Park, and when the officers arrived, sirens were blown, the stands quickly closed, and no gambling was found by the "task force."

Certainly, the Drum and Bugle Corps are well remembered by parade goers. They came to entertain at the parades, as well as take part in contests. In 1964 the top award went to the Cedar Lake AMVET Post 15 Drum Corps. That also was the year Republican vice-presidential candidate William E. Miller rode in the parade as 30,000 spectators watched.

Perhaps a reader remembers the name of the cowboy movie star who led the parade and entertained at the park a few decades ago.

Many people enjoyed hearing Legionnaire Harry Clark, a WWI veteran, announce the parade:

"And now for your listening pleasure, Post 101 proudly presents the

great Lowell High School Band; bring them on with a big hand!"

Down at the park on Labor Day in the 1920s: One remembers putting down a dime to spin a big arrow which pointed to all sorts of interesting items which he hoped to win. If you did win a small prize, the man in the tent often encouraged the winner to "Put it back with a nickel and try again." Because school always began the day after Labor Day, many students went quickly to Oakland Park to search for leftover treasures early on Tuesday morning.

Because school started the following day, families often left the park early in the evening on Labor Day, though hundreds would stay to see who won the automobile, and to watch the fireworks. Sometimes the drawing of the winning ticket would be delayed to keep the crowd at the park a little longer.

From The Lowell Tribune years ago: "Labor Day has developed into a regular Homecoming Day for former residents, and they were here in large numbers from many states."

From the foundation laid by those Labor Day pioneers of the 1920s, the Lowell Labor Day Organization, Inc., comprised of hard-working representatives of local organizations and clubs, have sponsored the celebration for over a decade and have worked hard to present another exciting parade and program this fast-approaching Labor Day weekend. For several years, the parade has had its start at Lowell High School and the surrounding area, since more room was needed for the huge show witnessed by thousands of spectators.







# The First Labor Day

The first Labor Day was celebrated on Tuesday, September 5, 1882, in New York City in accordance with the plans of the Central Labor Union.

In 1884 Monday was selected for the celebration, and organizations in other cities were urged to follow the New York example and celebrate a working men's holiday on that date. The idea spread with the growth of the unions, and by 1885 the day was celebrated in many of the industrial centers of the country.

At first only cities adopted the plan, then a few states passed laws in 1887, and by 1894 twenty-three states adopted the holiday. In the same year, the U.S. Congress passed an act making the first Monday in September a legal holiday.

A format was recommended: a morning parade to show the strength and the ability of the unions, followed by a festival for the recreation and entertainment of the workers. Speeches were later added to the suggested program.





## 83 Years and Going Strong

Lowell has been in the Labor Day parade business for 83 years and has packed a two-day festival around it to celebrate.

Indeed, the parade that salutes the American work ethic is described as the "longest, continuous Labor Day parade in the state."

It's worded in those terms because organizers believe other communities might have started their parades earlier than Lowell did in 1919, but history indicates none has maintained it as an annual event.







"Miss Lowell Centennial" is pictured in the Sept. 11, 1952 Lowell Tribune with her court. Patsy-ann Pletcher won the honor with 1,113,000 votes.

### Centennial Seal



Official Seal of The Lowell Centennial, Inc.

The official seal of the Lowell Centennial, Inc., designed by Lee McKee, Lowell's master of art, pictures the founder of Lowell, M. A. Halsted. The area's mode of travel in 1852, the covered wagon, is compared to 1952's modern mode, the streamlined deisel powered Monon train. Holding the spotlight, however, in the design, is Lowell's mark of distinction—sulphur water.

# 1952 Centennial Celebration

*Gala attracts 10,000 people over four-days filled with events*

Chicago Herald-American  
Thurs, Aug. 28, 1952

Lowell, down Indiana way, has a population of only 1,500, but more than 10,000 men, women and children will be on hand tomorrow when the little Lake County town, 50 miles southeast of Chicago's Loop, launches its four-day centennial celebration.

For months the women of Lowell

have been digging through attic trunks and storage boxes for full-skirted dresses, fluffy petticoats, bustles and flowery hats their grandmothers wore. These moderns will sport them for the four days of pageantry.

Men have been growing beards and mustachios; polishing high-topped boots; cleaning and brushing tight-legged trousers; high-lapeled coats and ancient hats of their forefathers. Old-time hoss rigs and

coaches have been refurbished and polished for the event.

Oldest of the living residents is Marshall Nickols, who arrived in Lowell as a babe in arms, and will observe his 98th birthday anniversary on opening day.

Nichols recalled: "Mel (Melvin A.) Halsted had laid out the first 16 lots for the town adjacent to the flour mill he built. That was two years before my folks brought me to Lowell.

"That was in 1852. He built a church three years later — a church which served all denominations.

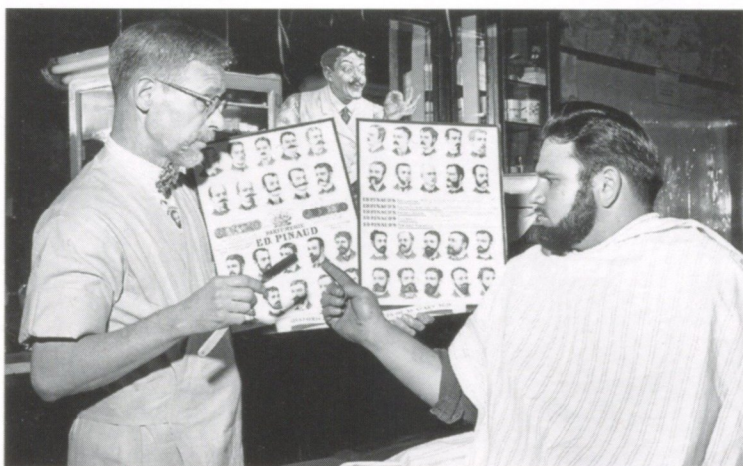
"I worked on the farms, in the sawmill — Halsted built that, too. I was one of the men who helped haul ties for the first railroad through this part of

Indiana. It's still running — the Monon."

He named it Lowell because, in his boyhood days, before heading West at the age of 13, young Halsted had visited — and liked — Lowell, Mass.

Lowell's centennial will feature Governor's Day Friday, with Governor Henry F. Schricker of Indiana as chief speaker; Indiana Day Saturday, with U.S. Senator William E. Jenner as speaker; Church and Fraternal Organization Day Sunday, and Veteran's Day Monday.

Governor Schricker will crown "Miss Lowell of the Centennial" — whose identity has not yet been disclosed — Friday. A pageant, "Our American Heritage," and fireworks displays, will feature the evening program.



### Parade Float Awards

**Friday — American Youth Day**  
Boy Scouts  
Lowell Happy Workers 4-H Club

**Saturday — Old Settlers' Day**  
1904 Cadillac — St. John's Garage  
Graves & Clark Hearse

**Sunday — Freedom of Religion Day**  
Trinity Lutheran Church  
St. Edward's Catholic Church

**Monday — Grand Prize**  
Peterson's Gladioli Farm  
Randolph Auto Sales





1952 Lowell Centennial: Geo Regnier (Lowell Grain and Hay), Ceylon Ashton (Davis Store), Bob Cullen Jr. (Cullen Chev.), Tony Schuring (Fireman), Harry Clark (Clark Bros. Monuments), Robert Cullen Sr. (Cullen Chev.), Roy Nixon (Mgr. Sears), Mr. Putnam, Ty Algea (Insurance Agent).





# OFFICERS

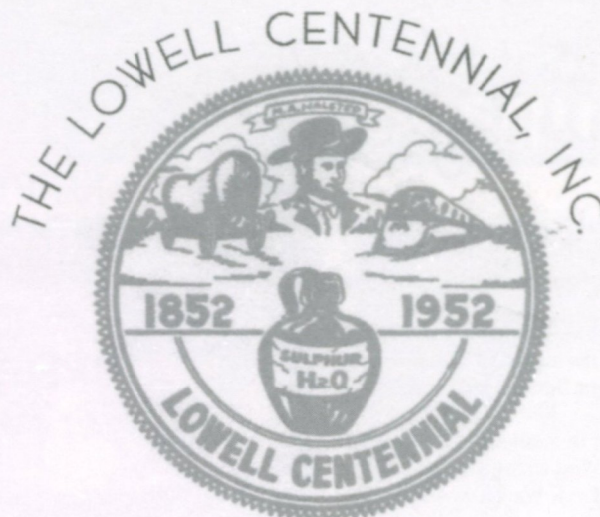
R. H. CULLEN  
President

LOYAL ALYEA  
Vice-President

ALVAH PLETCHER  
Secretary

REV. PAUL REISEN  
Treasurer

100 YEARS OF  
PROGRESS



LOWELL, INDIANA

# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

C. A. ASHTON  
Finance Chairman

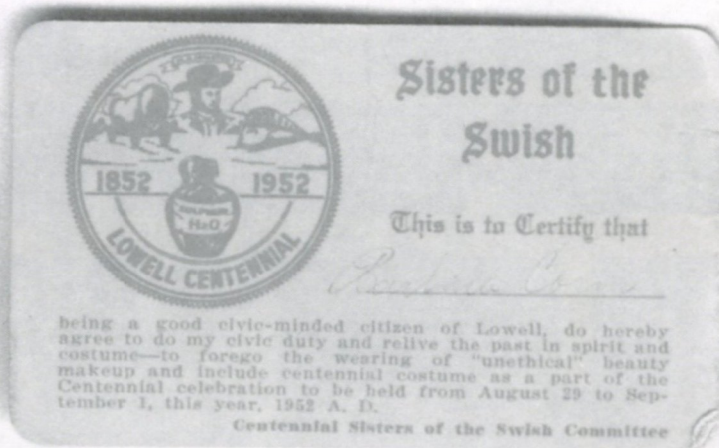
ROY NIXON  
Spectacle Ticket  
Division

ROBERT BRANNOCK  
Spectacle Division

DR. ROBERT CORNS  
Special Events

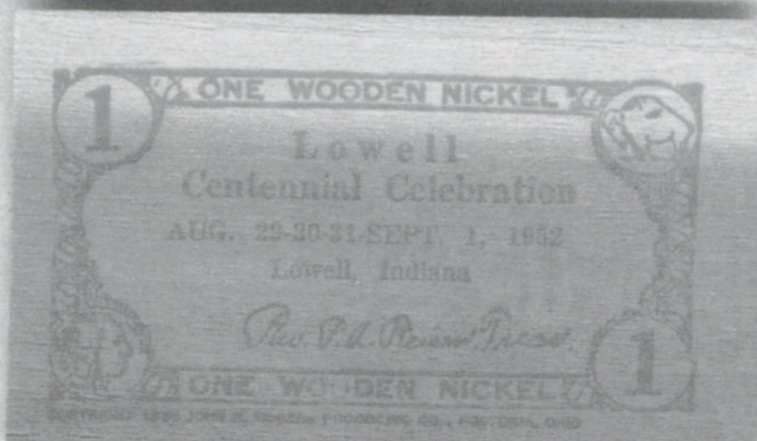
HARRY CLARK  
Publicity

EMIL HARDING  
Hospitality



Lowell Centennial Spectacle  
"OUR AMERICAN HERITAGE"  
ONE GENERAL ADMISSION  
— \$1.50 —  
Performance at 8:00 p.m.  
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 1

This check  
may be ex-  
changed for a  
succeeding per-  
formance if the  
pageant is of-  
ficially cancelled  
on Mon., Sept. 1.





# Three Creeks Monument chosen as symbol for Sesquicentennial logo



The town's Sesquicentennial Committee selected the logo to grace all publications, souvenirs and advertisements produced in commemoration of Lowell's 150th birthday in 2002.

The striking red, white and blue sesquicentennial logo features an artist's rendering of the historical Three Creeks Monument located in Olde Towne Square, Freemont Street and Commercial Avenue.

The monument was erected in memory of the men of Eagle Creek, Cedar Creek and West Creek townships who went to war to help preserve the union during the Civil War. It was built at a cost of \$3,000 and dedicated in June 1903.

The names of all 400 local residents who participated in the war between 1861 and 1865 appear on the monument.

Lowell's 150th birthday logo also carries the official sesquicentennial slogan adopted by the committee: "Proud Past, Bright Future."

The design is the collaborative effort of Amy Taylor of Lamar Industries in Merrillville and Donna Steward of Stewards Photography in Lowell.



## Spreading the word about our 150th birthday

# SESQUICENTENNIAL

# 1852



# 2002

The commemorative Sesquicentennial license plates were installed on all town-owned vehicles to help promote community awareness of the the 150th birthday celebration. Posing with the vehicles are: Director of Public Works Gregory Shook, Park Superintendent Thomas Sullivan, Assistant Street Superintendent Frank Lovely, Wastewater Superintendent Terrence Wright, Director of Administration Rick Dal Corobbo and Water Superintendent Daniel Myers.





# Guiding Lights of Sesquicentennial



**RICK DAL COROBBO**  
CO-CHAIRMAN



**JUDITH WALTERS**  
CO-CHAIRMAN



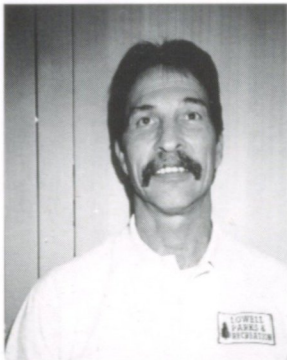
**RUTH DUNN**  
CO-CHAIRMAN



**SUSAN PETERSON**  
SECRETARY



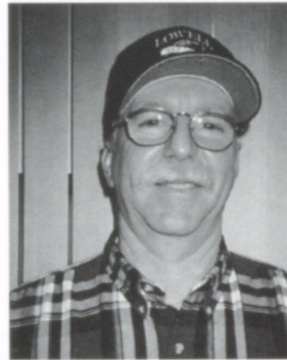
**MARCIA CARLSON**  
WEEKEND CHAIRMAN



**THOMAS SULLIVAN**  
WEEKEND CHAIRMAN



**NANCY NETHERY**  
WEEKEND CHAIRMAN



**DAN ADAMS**  
WEEKEND CHAIRMAN



**LINDA ADAMS**  
WEEKEND CHAIRMAN



**CHRISTINE MARBACH**  
COMMUNICATIONS



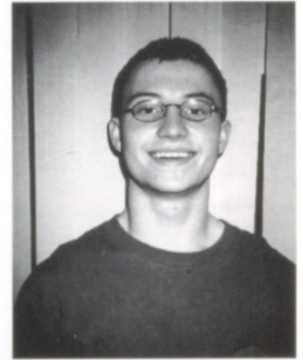
**DARLENE CORNS**  
ADVERTISING



**EDGAR CORNS**  
ADVERTISING



**DIANNE BOYLAN**  
PUBLICITY



**STEVEN MALONEY**  
GRAPHICS



# Town of Lowell gets a 150th birthday card from elementary students

Happy birthday to the Town of Lowell!

That's the sentiment in a giant birthday card constructed and painted by the Oak Hill Elementary School Student Council, who decided to get involved in the 2002 Lowell Sesquicentennial celebration.

The card was constructed and painted red, white and blue by the students under the supervision of teachers Betty O'Neill and David Lilly.

The card was unveiled last week at the Three Creeks Historical Association meeting, where members signed the card and became sponsors.

The card was displayed at various locations in Lowell to give the public the opportunity to sign it and lend their support to the birthday celebration.

The Lowell Sesquicentennial Committee asked for a minimum donation of \$10 from those who signed the card. The donations were used to sponsor the 150 candles that were put on the huge edible birthday cake that was made for the Sesquicentennial.

The birthday cake was cut and served during the first weekend in August, when the month-long celebration kicked off.

For their sponsorship, signers of the birthday card received a commemorative magnet.



The Lowell Chamber of Commerce building, which served as the information center during the town's 150th birthday celebration, was easy to find with the huge Sesquicentennial logo on its side.

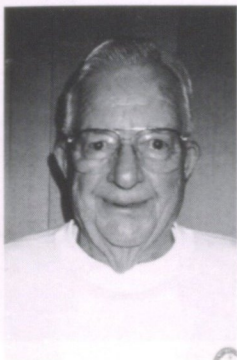


Special Sesquicentennial banners purchased jointly by the town's Economic Development Commission and the Lowell Chamber of Commerce graced the utility poles along Commercial Avenue.





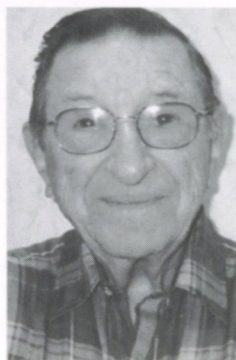
# *Thank you to everyone who helped make Lowell's 150 year celebration a success!*



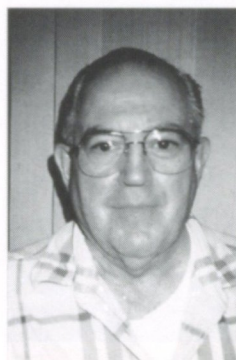
**GARLAND  
FISH**



**OPAL  
NICHOLS**



**RICHARD  
SCHMAL**



**ORVILLE  
CORN**



**WILLIAM  
PETERSON**



**BARBARA  
PETERSON**



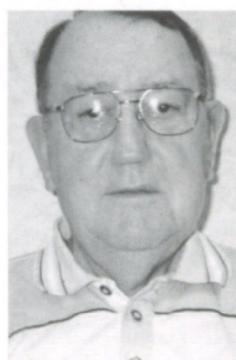
**BARBARA  
MILLER**



**BETTY  
O'NEILL**



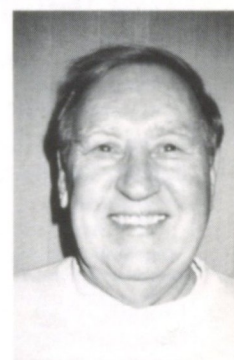
**ALMA  
FINNEY**



**MELVIN  
FINNEY**



**MARY GAIL  
HOLLEY**



**TALAREK  
RAYMOND**



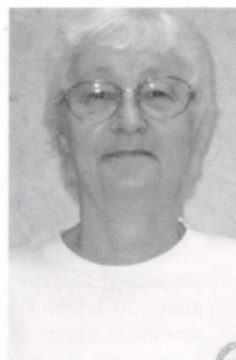
**POLLY  
ROBERTS**



**MARILYN  
KARLSON**



**CHARLOTTE  
SERAMUR**



**ROSETTA  
HOTLER**



**LOUISE  
ROYS**





## Garden Club members decided it was about 'Time' for a new Addition

Time didn't really stand still for the Lowell Garden Club, it just moved very slowly.

That's why it was difficult for members to remember just how long they waited to erect a town clock in Lowell, even as the massive reproduction was lifted onto its concrete pad and bolted to the ground December 8.

"It's been five years, I'd say," said President Karen Ogle, who stood with about 10 other members watching volunteers install the clock.

Approximately \$8,500 was raised by the Garden Club, through flower sales, garden walks and other projects, to realize their goal of adding a timepiece the entire town could enjoy.

"We are dedicated to the beautification of Lowell, and this was an idea we had," said Ogle. "It's all paid for."

Originally destined for the downtown business district, the clock had trouble finding a home that the Town Council would approve until Lowell Fire Chief Jack Eskridge came to the rescue.

"He kind of took the ball and ran

with it, and we are grateful," said a club member.

"They needed a place to display it, and they are going to add landscaping so we found a spot," said Eskridge. "We worked a deal to move our sign, because they wanted a better location, so the Garden Club is buying the fire department a new lighted sign, and I think everyone will be happy."

"We had to wait for the concrete pad to be poured and to cure before we could put up the clock, but now it serves as the first addition for the Lowell Sesquicentennial in 2002, and it was our goal to have it up for the celebration," added Ogle.

"We wanted to get it up and lighted today so people heading to the 'Parade of Lights' could see it," added project chair Peggy Sierzputowski.

The 25-30 active Garden Club members plan to finish the clock project in the spring by installing about 50 bricks around the base to recognize donors and volunteers who helped with the project and planting flowers. "We'll have a dedication then to honor everyone who helped," said Ogle.





Oak Hill Elementary  
presents

# A Trunk Full of History



*a play about historical places  
and people in our town*

Presented on May 15-16, 2002

Written and directed by

Betty O'Neill & Jane Fedler

with the support of the

Tri-Creek Education Foundation, Inc.



## Cast of Characters

Richard .....	Kirk Wynsma
Martha .....	Kayla Robertson
Mom .....	Katie Kutemeier
Jabez Clark .....	Kristina Hudacin
Jonah Thorn .....	Erin Gavelek
Melvin Halsted .....	Lexie Itczak
Mrs. Halsted .....	Lindsey Rozek
C.E. Nichols .....	Trinity Anderson
Pioneer, Mrs. Driscoll .....	Stephanie Goodrich
Merit Kelsey .....	Alex Steuer
Sam .....	Ryan Hutchison
Mary .....	Nicole Starcevlch
Fireman #1 .....	Rachel Keaney
Fireman #2 .....	Melanie Picard
Dr. Bacon .....	Kristen Anderson
Phone Operator .....	Emily Derr
Soldier .....	Kelly O'Connell
Librarian .....	Liz Hall
Karen Brooker .....	Lauren Seramur
Board Member #1 .....	Kristina Hudacin
Board Member #2 .....	Erin Gavelek
Board Member #3 .....	Katie Kutemeier
Mr. Love .....	Britnei Cowan
Murrell Belanger .....	Emily Derr
Train Engineer .....	Vicki Stevens
Baseball Player .....	Brittany Robinson
Paper Reporter .....	Brittany Robinson
Ray McIntire .....	Trinity Anderson

## Scenery, Props, Chorus & Artwork

Ashley Anderson	Katie Meyers
Brianna Berwick	Chassie Schultz
Ryan Eller	Courtney Stahl
Charlie Fenner	Natalie Symons
Natalie Ford	Samantha Thompson
Ashley Grady	Mrs. Cooksley
Justin Hudacin	Mrs. Hanaway
Deron Johnson	Mrs. Hernan
Lilly Mislan	Mrs. Larsen

## Barbershop Quartet

Britnei Cowan	Billy Morgan
Austin Davis	Deron Johnson
Miss Bluett	

## Publicity

Ashley Anderson	Deron Johnson
Mrs. Cooksley	

## Lighting

Ryan Eller	Deron Johnson
Charlie Fenner	Justin Hudacin
Mr. Lilly	

## Special Thanks To:

The Tri-Creek Education Foundation  
Mr. Richard Schmal: Lowell Historian



# Municipal Government

## *1868 petition results in town of Lowell's incorporation*

A petition by the qualified voters of Lowell was presented to the Board of Commissioners of Lake County at their June meeting in 1868, praying for an order to determine the wishes of the people of Lowell regarding the incorporation of the town. The prayer was heard and granted, and an election was held, resulting in incorporation.

At the September 1868 term of the commissioners court, an order was made incorporating the territory as set forth in the petition. Viz, the south half of Section 23, Town 33, Range 9 West made in the name of Lowell. The First Election of officers was held September 26, 1868, when the following persons were chosen trustees - L.H. Westerman, P.A. McCay, and John Lynch. Clerk, Assessor, and Treasurer was Daniel Fry. Marshall was Cornelius Blachley. A bond of \$100 was required of the Marshal, and \$300 of the Treasurer.

The politicians of that day also played 'musical chairs,' with the officers of the county 10 years later in 1847 as follows: Henry Wells, sheriff; H.D. Palmer, associate judge; Hervey Ball, probate judge; D.K. Pettibone, clerk; Joseph Jackson, auditor; Major Allman, recorder; William C. Farrington, treasurer; Alex

McDonald, assessor; and S.T. Green, H.S. Pelton and Robert Wilkinson, the county commissioners.

The Old Timer's grandfather, Adam Schmal, a pioneer since the age of nine, was elected Lake County Commissioner in 1857 and again in 1862 and was elected Lake County Treasurer in 1867.

The office of probate judge was abolished in 1851, along with the office of associate judge.

The counties of Lake and Porter formed one state representative district until 1850, and in the first election in 1837, J. Hammel of Porter County was elected, followed by Lewis Warriner of Cedar Lake in 1839; then A. McDonald. David Turner was selected in 1855, A. McDonald in 1857, Elihu Griffin in 1859, Bartlett Woods in 1861, D.K. Pettibone in 1863, Bartlett Woods in 1861, H. Wason in 1867, E.C. Field in 1869, and Martin Wood in 1871 and 1873. Two of the early state senators were David Turner and R.C. Wedge.

A young lawyer from Crown Point, Charles F. Griffin, served as Indiana Secretary of State from 1887 to 1891.

Most of the early political history of the Town of Lowell began at the time of consolidation in 1869, when

the first three members of the Town Board were elected along with one clerk and one treasurer. George Mee was president of the board in 1869, and George Waters became the town clerk.

The Old Timer was privileged to scan through some old records of the treasurer. Among the interesting items posted in the old ledgers; "Paid M.A. Halsted 70 dollars (in 1869) for "Pound"; 2 well buckets, 2 dollars; 1 chair, 60¢ 1872 - a bill allowed for a team (of horses) to go to Crown Point, 3 dollars; ten dollars was given to John Hack for services as trustee for one year."

D. Powers was trustee president in 1872, followed by Jacob Baughman. In 1881 the Town Board members were John Denney, J. Baughman and John E. Davis. In 1883 the account of Treasurer C.C. Sanger was examined and signed by trustees Melvin Halsted and Martin Schur.

Some notations through the years show that some of the Town Board members were paid five dollars for a year. In 1881 the pay was 12 dollars, and election workers were paid \$1.50. Another salary in 1881 was 22 dollars paid to Perkins Turner, who served as town marshal, while John Leary received two dollars per month to light the street lamps.

By 1883 Melvin Halsted, John Denney and Martin Schur each received 12 dollars as trustees.

L.W. Ragon (owner of The Lowell Tribune) was town clerk in 1899, after Peter A. Berg in 1898. Charles Childress received 20 dollars as caretaker of the cemetery in 1899. One interesting notation in the old ledger was an ordinance in 1899 giving the specifications for a wooden sidewalk.

Town officials were listed in the 1909 Directory of Lake County as follows: A.S. Hull, president; H.F. Carstens, trustee; Edwin J. Pixley, clerk; H.M. Johnson, treasurer; and Charles Belshaw, marshal. On the School Board that year were William Sheets, president; Davis Driscoll, secretary, and William Love, treasurer.

The present town officers are J. Clark, Martin Driscoll and P.D. Clark. Clerk-Treasurer - Hiram Haskin; and the Marshal, C.C. Pattee. The two last named officers were required to give a bond of \$3000. The salary of the trustees and the clerk is \$50 per year. The Marshal is paid \$30 per month.

The job descriptions have changed and the salaries of those early officials have multiplied many times over the years, something modern politicians can't argue about.



The town's first new Town Hall building was constructed in 1924. It is shown in a 1952 photograph.



The former library located in the "Town Square" was funded in large part by a 1920 donation from the Carnegie Corporation. That building served as the Town Hall until 1973 when it moved to its present location on Main and Freemont.



The new Town Hall is located at 501 East Main Street. It has housed the town's municipal offices since 1995.



**Larry Just**  
Council President



**David Gard**  
Council Vice-President



**Judith Walters**  
Town Clerk-Treasurer



**Raymond Talarek**  
Councilman - Ward 1



**Karen Brooker**  
Councilwoman - Ward 2



**Robert Hatch**  
Councilman - Ward 3



# Water System

In November 1898 Lowell's first municipal water system was nearing completion, designed to furnish an abundant supply of pure water, besides providing fire protection to nearly every acre in town. The work had been started only two months before, and was slowed by stormy weather.

Three miles and 142 feet of water mains were laid, including eight-inch, six-inch, and four-inch diameter pipe, with 32 fire hydrants placed strategically for good fire protection.

Valves were also placed in the mains, so that direct force could be used in case of fire. The work on the new water system was completed soon after the big fire of 1898.

A large "standpipe" was installed at the town square, on the site of the present Olde Town Square. Constructed of high grade steel, it was 100 feet high and ten feet in diameter, with a capacity of over 59,000 gallons. Six hours of pumping was required to fill the huge tank. Through the years, many youths climbed the steel ladder to the top on a dare.

The 1898 pump house was built near the site of the present one on Liberty St., just north of the post office. It was a brick structure, 24-by-28 feet, 12 feet high, with two rooms. In the west room was a 60-horse-power boiler, while the east room housed a 40-horsepower engine and pump. The pump was a Deplex, capable of throwing 750,000 gallons of water in 24 hours, considered a very efficient machine.



**Water Superintendent  
Daniel Myers**

The water was obtained from a well 180 feet deep and eight inches in diameter, with the soft water rising to within 10 inches of the top. The attached reservoir had a capacity of 15,000 gallons.

The contractors, Western Engineering and Construction Co. of Chicago, tested the new system in December 1898 and soon turned it over to the Town of Lowell. The editor of the Lowell Tribune remarked: "They have given our town an honest job." C.M. Sechner, secretary of the company, was said to be a first-class machinist with years of experience in the business.

Hack and Jull, who had the contract for digging the trenches, broke ground on the morning of Oct. 5, 1898, the morning after the big fire, and with many difficulties, pushed the work to rapid completion. It was said at that time that the Town of Lowell should feel proud of the improvement in the water works and that they would not be sorry for the investment.

In May 1910 a bond issue of \$3,500 was granted for water improvements, and in October of that year, J.E. Pickens of Kankakee, Ill., was employed to draw plans and give specifications for a new well and machinery. Sealed bids were opened Dec. 9, 1910, and contracts for the work were let.

The old standpipe was cleaned at intervals of five or more years, and in March 1950, Tincher and Smith of Crown Point did extensive repairs and also fitted the old water tower with a needed cover.

For many years the annual water revenue collected was \$6,500, from a flat rate fee. Revenues increased to \$8,000 in 1949.

As Lowell grew, many two-inch and smaller mains were connected to the original system, and by 1955, 29 additional fire hydrants had been connected to the old mains. During that same year, the standpipe was drained of water due to the terrible heat of July and August.

Many of the old valves could not be operated, so plans were made for their replacement, along with 1,000 more feet of eight-inch main, 3,700 feet of six-inch main, more hydrants, and pumping improvements to meet

the need.

A new elevated tank was proposed at a cost of \$31,790, and service meters were to be installed at a cost of \$60.22 each. A four-point water improvement program was recommended by the engineering firm of Clyde Williams and Associates, approved by the Indiana Public Service Commission, and included water treatment to remove the sulphur odor.

According to an article in the Lowell Tribune in January 1957, the size of the tank was 200,000 gallons, and the foundations were already finished near the pumping station on the east side of Liberty St. The town dump was also in the area, and plans were being made to cover the unsightly trash with fill and make a playground for children.

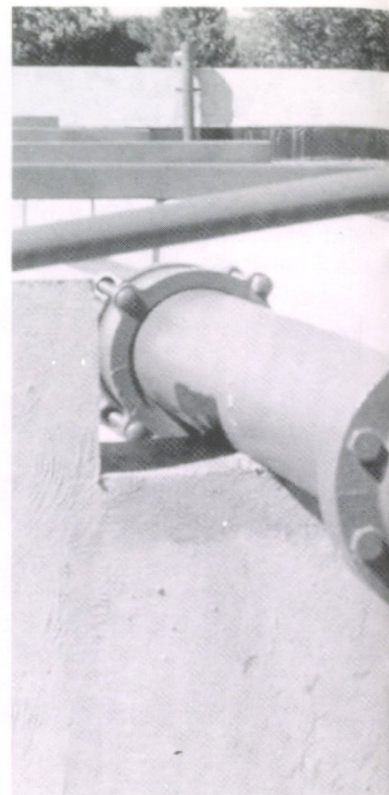
When the new tank was completed, the old standpipe on the town square was torn down, and improvements were made at the park there. The rim of the present fountain in Senior Citizens Park is the base of that old standpipe.

March 1957 began a new era in Lowell's history when odorless water began to flow through the faucets. The water tower on Liberty St. was completed and 'Lowell' was painted on the sides and the top. The desulphurizing equipment was installed and put into full operation by W.F. Brunt of Cedar Lake. Additional water mains were laid for many of the town's new subdivisions, and water meters were installed in homes and businesses by Nichols Plumbing of Lowell.

Years before, a large welcome sign appeared at the north entrance of the town reading "Drink Nature's Tonic, Lowell's Sulphur Water," but in 1957, the Lowell Tribune editor had this to say: "By early spring, Lowell visitors will no longer find the water offensive and residents will have lost their taste for good, old sulphur water."

Since 1957 many changes have taken place in Lowell's water system, with many more miles of pipe laid, new wells drilled, and an additional water tower constructed at Evergreen Park on Lowell's east side.

As reported in 1998 by ABC 7 News reporter Ron Magers, Lowell has faced intense challenges in



maintaining a healthy, affordable water supply. In the late 1980s the EPA found the levels of fluoride in the water drinking system too high.

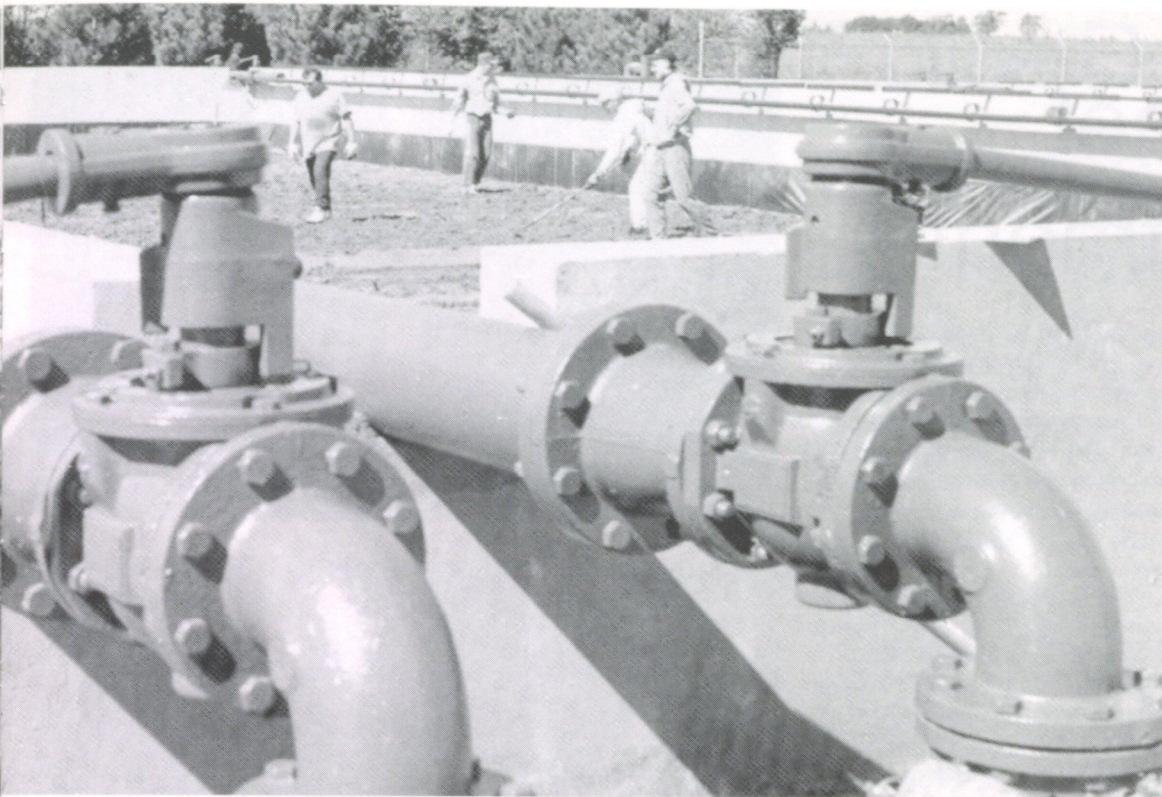
"Our first approach was to try to obtain Lake Michigan drinking water," said Bob Hatch, president of the town council at that time.

Lowell is about 25 miles south of Lake Michigan, and more importantly, Lowell is about six miles south of the Lake Michigan drainage basin. Therefore, to take water from Lake Michigan would require the unanimous approval of eight midwestern states and two Canadian provinces under the Great Lakes charter. Michigan Governor John Engler said no.

Facing court action from the EPA and the no vote from Michigan, Lowell went south of town and began to build new wells and a new water processing plant. When the town first installed the wells and pumping stations it was hoped that they would supply water for the next 50 years, but more immediate action has been necessary.

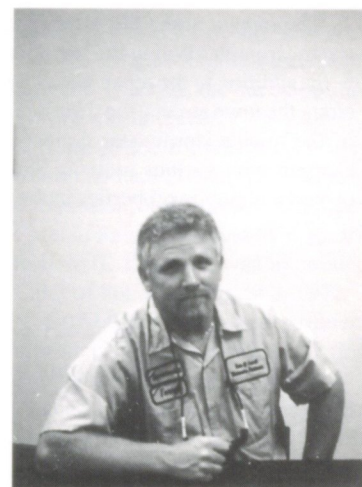
To prepare the Town of Lowell for the anticipated future growth of our community, the town's sixth well was put on-line in 2000 and there are plans in the works for the seventh. Town officials are also investigating alternative water sources to supplement the well supply.





Reed beds at Lowell  
Wastewater Treatment Plant  
c.1994.

Wastewater Superintendent  
Terrence Wright



# Wastewater Treatment Facility

## *Lowell-Cedar Lake join forces to ensure future growth*

In 1970 the Town Board of Lowell addressed themselves to the probable difficulties that might be expected during a period of rapid community growth.

One outstanding problem that surfaced was an apparent inability to adequately treat the expected daily volumes of wastewater through our existing treatment facility.

Purity standards for effluent discharge were rapidly changing due to an increased interest in our environment. These changes made our existing treatment facility obsolete. The full capacity of the plant was being used and sometimes exceeded in handling our current volume.

Questions arose concerning the advisability of modernizing and enlarging the existing facility. Would the existing plant site allow for expansion to meet the future needs of Lowell? Or should a new facility be constructed which would be capable of expansion to meet those needs?

Cedar Lake, Indiana, our northern neighbor, was also embarking

upon a sewer project: construction of a sewer-receiving system and treatment plant to serve the entire town of Cedar Lake. The plant was to be located about midway between Lowell and Cedar Lake and the effluent from the plant was to be discharged into Cedar Creek and then pass through Lowell on its way to the Kankakee River.

A consulting engineering firm employed by the Town of Lowell reported that considerable economic advantages might be realized by both towns if we would combine our efforts in constructing a Wastewater Treatment facility to serve both communities.

Federal and state funding was applied for by the engineers. Preliminary design plans were prepared: plant sites, methods of local financing, serving area growth patterns, sewer line routes, etc. were investigated. All were necessary considerations prior to filing for federal and state funding. All this information was submitted to state and federal agencies in 1971.

After many revisions and discussions, notification of funding was received on January 3, 1973, from the Environmental Protection Agency. The funding was approved for 75% federal, 10% state and 15% local funds toward the total project cost.

After complying with all of the conditions for E.P.A. funding, bids were taken on the project in mid-1973. The lowest bids received on the project were: Division I, Interceptor Sewer Line, \$1,645,670; Division II of the project, the plant, was completed on schedule. Difficulties during construction of the interceptor line and disputes between the contractor and the town caused a delay in construction that resulted in the termination of Division I contract prior to completion of the project.

Bids were again received in late 1975 for completion of Division I of the original contract. A new contractor was selected and the project is scheduled for completion in mid-1976.

Upon completion the project will

serve the projected needs for citizens in its 18.3 square mile area including Cedar Lake, Lake Dalecarlia, Lowell and surrounding areas.

This cooperative spirit resulted in the first regional wastewater treatment facility in the state of Indiana.

Since its construction, the plant has undergone numerous expansion projects to handle the growth in both Lowell and Cedar Lake.

Town officials are continuing their efforts to improve the quality of the water sent out to customers from the Lowell Water Treatment Plant.

Construction began in late 2001 on a \$238,300 soda ash feed system designed to reduce the corrosive effect our often unstable water has on water lines. The project is expected to be completed by spring.

Most recently, \$2.2 million was spent on a plant upgrade and an additional \$6 million more is expected to be invested in the facility over the next two years to ensure the future growth of both towns.

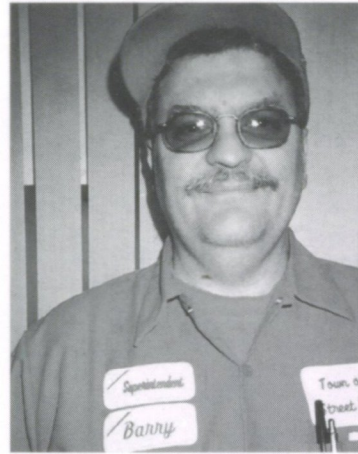


# Street Department

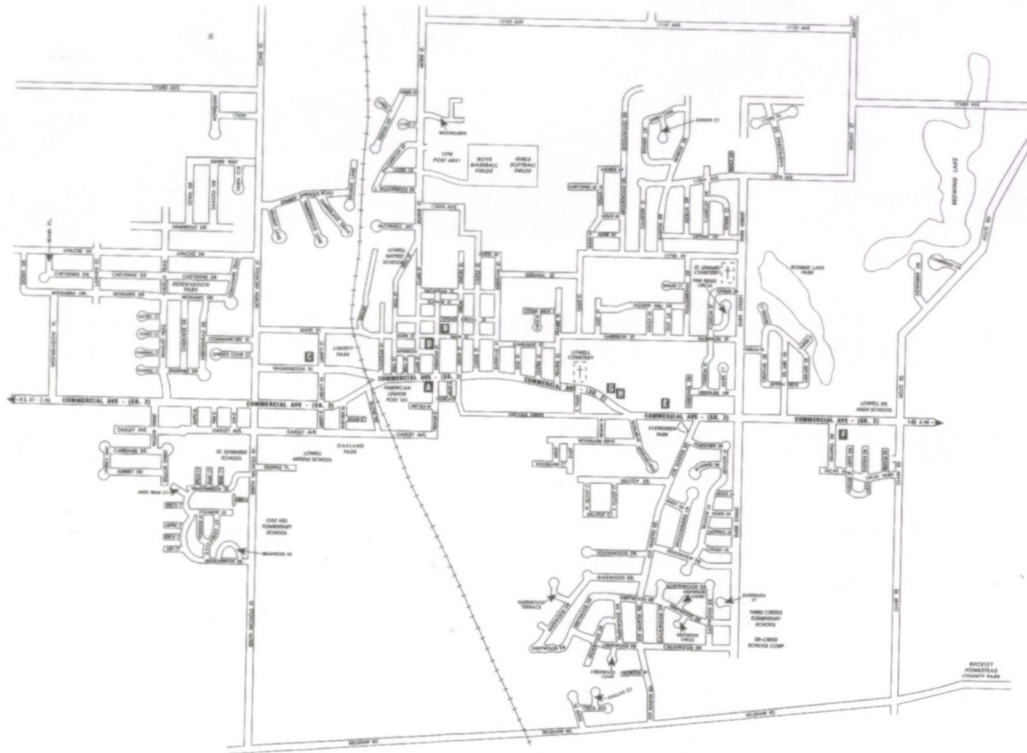
The town's Street Department is responsible for the maintenance of the six square miles within the municipal borders of the community.

In addition to the repair and cleaning of local roadways and snow removal along the town streets, the department is also responsible for the maintenance of the town's stormwater drainage system. The Street Department is also charged with various mowing and landscaping chores along municipally-owned and public properties in the community.

**Barry Davis**  
Street Superintendent



**Gregory Shook**  
Director of Public Works



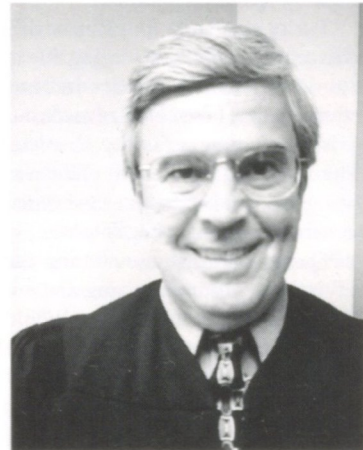
# Town Court

The town's first court was created in 1999 and the first judge, Thomas Vanes, was elected that fall. He took office on Jan. 1, 2000.

The first session of the Lowell Town Court was held on March 2000. Sessions are conducted on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month in the Council Chambers at Town Hall.

While the majority of cases heard in the local court are for traffic and municipal ordinance violations, several misdemeanor hearings are also now held here rather than in Crown Point.

Judge Vanes maintains an office at Town Hall, as does his court clerk, who maintains all court files and is available to accept payments and answer court inquiries.



**Thomas Vanes**  
Town Judge



The police department obtained two new four-wheel drive Jeep Cherokees under a lease-purchase agreement in 2001.



# Police Department changes with times

*Dept. implements state-of-the-art equipment*

The first town marshal was Edward Curtiss, appointed May 3, 1869. His duties consisted to being pound master and levying fines. The fine for letting hogs, cows, horses and sheep run loose was thirty-five cents.

After the fire in 1898 the marshal was on duty during the day and a night watchman would watch and walk the business district looking for fires.

The marshals lived on the present building's second floor until 1961. During the time James T. Taylor served as marshal, 1956 – 1961, radios were installed in the two police vehicles on the Lake County Sheriff Department's frequency and the police auxiliary was organized.

From 1961 to December 1, 1968, police calls were taken in the office during the daytime and evening and night calls would be taken by the sheriff's department, who in return gave reports to Lowell's vehicle.

December 1, 1968 Lowell installed their own base radio, the first dispatchers being Arlene Brumbaugh and Dorothy Gwyn. December 1, 1968 through December 31, 1969, calls were taken by the employees of the town hall during the day and evening. One night dispatcher in the police department hired additional

female civilians for twenty-four hour service in the dispatching room. January 1, 1972, the metropolitan system was initiated.

First police commissioners were Chairman Paul D. Schuyler, Richard C. Steinkamp and Robert E. Griesmer. Chief of Police was Russell V. Vicari. Robert N. Callahan was appointed Chief of Police on August 8, 1972.

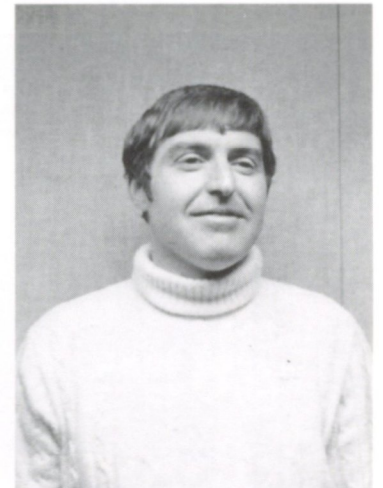
On May 16, 1973, the department moved their new facilities to the first floor of the same building.

Since the metropolitan system, the department moved to their new facilities, a new base radio has been installed, a compatible alarm and filing system initiated, ambulance and two fire departments' calls now taken by dispatchers, rules and regulations been set, the fleet of police vehicles increased to five, a soft look in uniforms for officers been adopted to be worn for appearances, functions, etc., latent finger printing and riot control equipment acquired, police and community and Officer Friendly programs implemented.

Federal grants have been approved for a juvenile officer, special training and schooling for officers and civilian personnel, Ileen System, camera equipment, radar, base radio, portable and mobile radios.



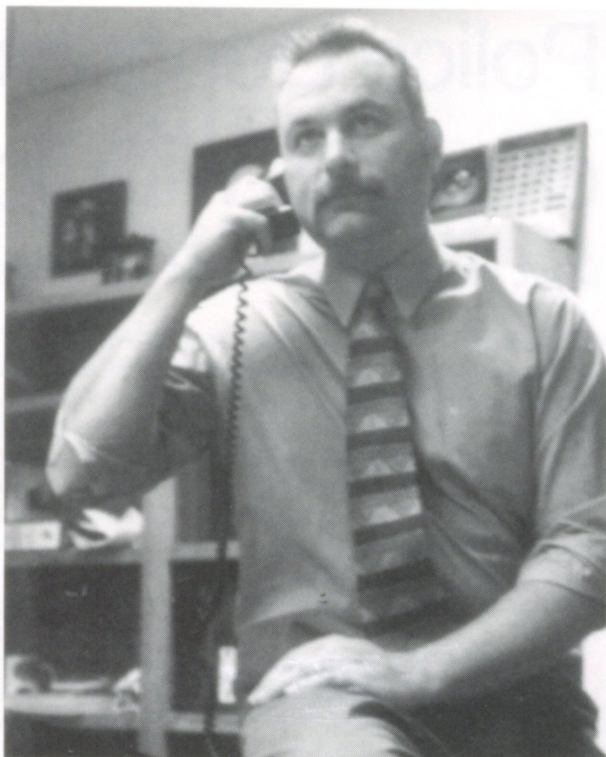
Robert Callahan



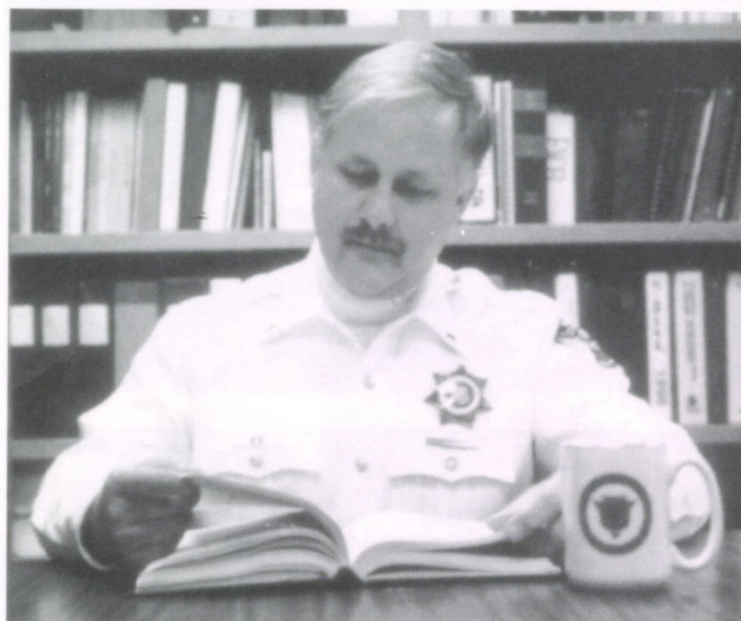
Tom Felder



**David Wilson**  
Chief of Police



**Gerold "Jerry" Stout**  
Lieutenant



## Sergeants



**Todd Angerman**



**Frank Thorpe**

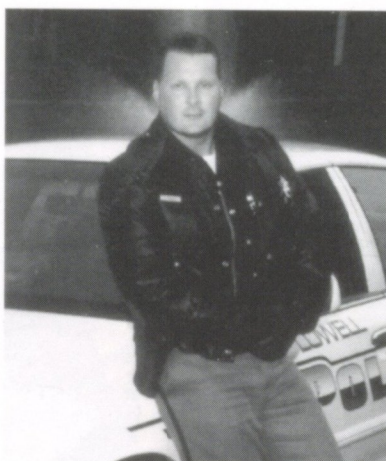


**Shane Tucker**

## Detectives



**John Swisher**



**Scott Tokach**

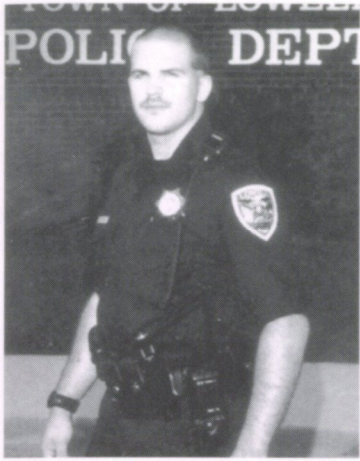
## K-9 Officer



**Richard Neal**



## Patrolmen



Jeff Burk



Robert Hornickel



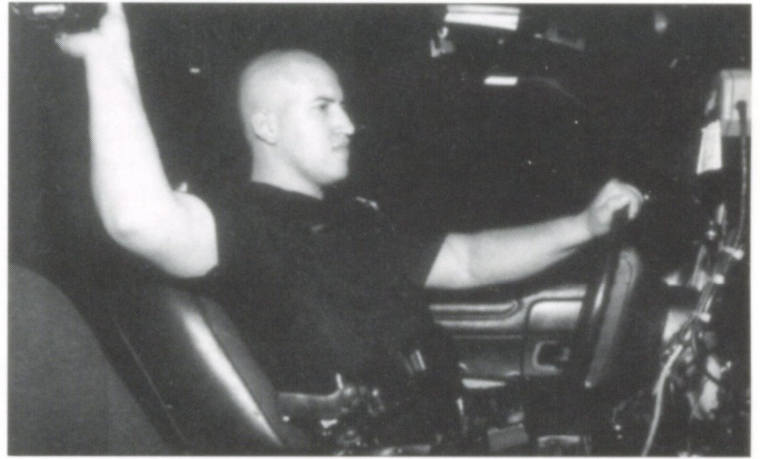
Kyle Kozubal



Erik Matson

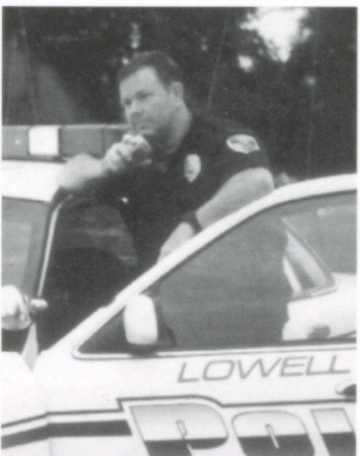


Justin Nestor

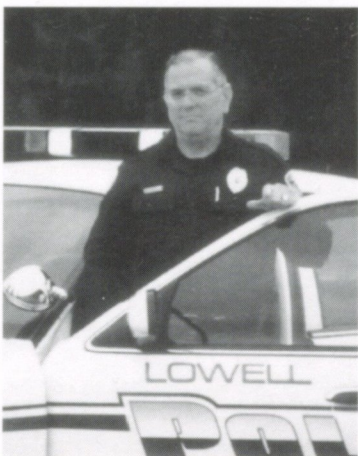


Luke Schreiber

## Reserve Officers



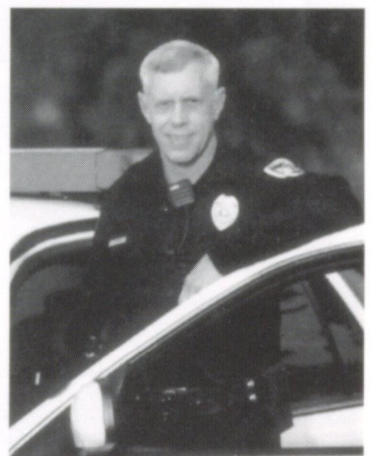
Daniel J. Higby



Ray Highfill



Eric McLean



Jarrell Price



# Lowell Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.

## *Active members dedicate years of experience to town*

The Lowell Volunteer Fire Department was organized in 1897 by a group of citizens to protect their own property as well as others. The first meeting was held Oct. 5, 1897 with the first appointed Chief being M.E. Nafus.

On Nov. 2, 1897 Charles Sherard became the first elected Chief. He served in that position until June 7, 1898. In the past 100 years there have been only eighteen chiefs. At the time of organization, the equipment consisted of hand pulled carts with buckets and horse drawn wagon.

It wasn't until 1916 when the town purchased its first fire engine, which was a 1916 Reo Chemical Truck. The Town of Lowell since then has only replaced each engine three times. Purchased was a 1949 Chevy custom built truck with a mid-ship pump. To replace it was a 1962 Chevy custom built pumper with 1000 gpm midship pump. In 1995, the Town of Lowell added a 1975 aerial pumper.

Cedar Creek Township, who also owned equipment used and operated by the Lowell Volunteer Fire Department purchased its first fire engine in 1928 followed by replacing them in order with a 1949, 1966 and present fire engine which was purchased in 1984. It is a custom built America LaFrance on Ford with 1000 gpm two stage pump.

The storage of fire equipment started in the still existing downtown area in private businesses or garages. Men were summoned by the sound of a big bell ringing. We think the bell on display at the new fire station may be that same bell.

As years passed and fire engines were purchased, they kept them at the Old Police Station, Town Hall and what is also known as the Senior Citizen's Park.

In 1950, Cedar Creek Township built a new fire station at Fremont and Jefferson Streets. The Township still owns the building and is now housing the Cedar Creek Trustee and a Community Building.

After many years of growth and still in the '80s we were keeping fire units outside and at different locations. Through a lot of effort, planning and fighting, the Town of Lowell then built our existing fire station. This was made possible when the town received a \$75,000 grant from the county in addition to the local tax revenue.

These funds built and completed the bay area for the apparatus and built the shell for the administrative offices. The 66 x 70 administration area was then completed and paid for by the volunteers with the assistance of all-volunteer labor to be complete the building. The community came to-

gether to show what can be done when it needs to be. The Lowell Volunteer Fire Department moved into the new building on June 3, 1983.

Over the years, many expansions were made to better serve the people. Many different pieces of equipment were added including water trucks, grass truck and emergency units. The first water truck was purchased by the volunteers in 1936. At that time, as it is today, many departments buy second hand trucks and build their own. In 1976 Cedar Creek Township purchased their first tanker. Shortly after that purchase, the volunteers added a second unit which they now own as a corporation.

The membership of the volunteer department has varied since organizing in 1897. From records we have, the roster in the early days and up until the 1940s was approximately 20-30 members. From the 1940s until the late 1960s and early 1970s there were just 12 to 16 members at all times. It did grow from there and today stands at approximately 30 active members.

There have been many years of dedicated service to the department and community. As of 1986 there have been 64 members with ten years or more service. Back to 1897 these men have been recognized by placing their name on a large station plaque with years of service.

There were many members who served the department 20 to 48 years. Harold W. "Bus" Brownell, who helped to organize the largest volunteer firemen's organization, received and carried card number one. Bus served 48 years on the fire department and was fire chief 30 of those years. John Eskridge Sr. was another who served the department 37 years, of which he was secretary-treasurer for 33 years. These men retired in 1969 and 1970 respectively.

In 1971 the Lowell Volunteer Fire Department incorporated and became a not-for-profit corporation because of the changing times and growth. Joseph Mika, who served the department for 30 years and retired in 1984, was the first elected president and held that position until his retirement. The list could go on, but check the big honor plaque hanging on display in the station.

The Lowell Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. is still growing and progressing each year to provide the people of our community the best in protection.

**The 1952 Lowell Volunteer Fire Department, pictured below, consisted of just 15 members, half the numbers of the current Department.**







Jack Eskridge, Joe Mika and Bob Callahan

## Tri-Creek Emergency Medical Service

*Demand for better care leads to cooperative effort to bring about new service*

The Tri-Creek Emergency Medical Service today is because of a dedicated concern of the Lowell Volunteer Fire Department, the Lowell Lion's Club, the Lowell Rotary and the Young Farmers. In 1970, the local funeral director who provided ambulance service at that time decided to retire that service and brought in a private one.

As time went by we became upset with the type of service and the proficiency of care our people were receiving. Sometime between the end of 1973 and early 1974 a community meeting was held for the concern of the Tri-Creek community and ambulance service.

The Lowell Volunteer Fire Dept. stepped forward and took over the newly organized service providing the assistance needed to man the unit. Three full time employees were hired and the shifts were 24 hours with the second man on the shift coming from the volunteer firemen.

The Lowell Lions donated \$8,000

to offset the purchase of the first ambulance. A grant was received through the State for an additional \$10,500. Another driving force was the former State Senator Ernie Niemeyer who conducted the community meeting.

In 1974, the EMS Commission of the State of Indiana was born as well as Tri-Creek EMS. Shortly after, a not-for-profit corporation known as the Tri-Creek Ambulance Service was formed with the three Township Trustees, their board, and a representative from Lowell and Schneider.

Still today, the Tri-Creek EMS provides the best of advanced life support to the Tri-Creek Community and the Lowell Volunteer Fire Dept. along with Lake Dalecarlia, Schneider and Shelby providing assistance and rescue when needed in the most professional manner.

Today the Tri-Creek EMS units and paramedics are housed in the Town of Lowell Fire Station and serve all of the Tri-Creek Community.



# Parks and Recreation

## *Town offers sites for outdoor entertainment*

Long before there was any thought given to a Lowell Park and Recreation Board there did exist a need for a town park for public use.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s there was the so-called McNay Park. It wasn't actually a park, but was the pasture of P.Z. McNay located at the northeast corner of Washington and Nichols Streets. Early Labor Day celebrations were held there.

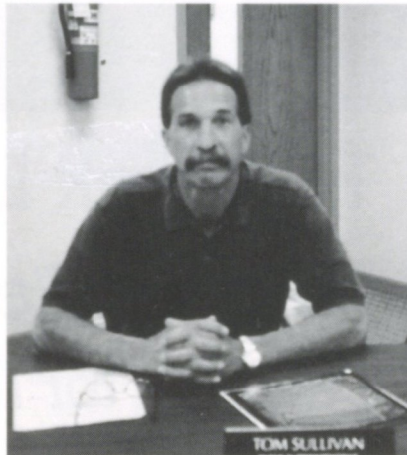
Also about the same time, March 2, 1858, Lot 15 was purchased from Andrew H. and Amanda Merton for \$1,000 by Phebe Thorn who then deeded this parcel of land to the Town of Lowell. Lots 16 and 17 were purchased from Mary Janet and O.D. Watkins for \$50 on April 19, 1858. The parcel where the war monument sits was filed for by the town on June 2, 1972, since no records could be found. That completed the Town Square. On February 22, 1971, the Town Board, Park Board and the Lowell Women's Club met to discuss the developing of the Town Square into the part now known as the Senior Citizen's Park. Construction started in April, 1972 and the total cost to the Women's Club was \$4200 plus a lot of donated help.

Lot 38 of the original Union Addition to Lowell, plotted in 1864, is the Library Park located north of the new public library. This parcel of land was bought from Jabez Clarke by John Cox for \$300 in 1869. Cox sold it to Alfred A. Gerrish for \$650 in 1878. The property was passed down through his heirs to Martha B. Bacon who left it to her heirs, Sylvia and Schuyler Dwyer and Grace M. and Alna L. Spindler, who sold it to Merrit W. Kelsey (trustee of Cedar Creek) for \$1. Thus it became school property on January 28, 1928. The Lowell Town Board bought it from the school board on Jan. 13, 1975.

On March 6, 1922, the Board of Directors of the Oakland Park Association sold the park located on Oakley Street to the Town of Lowell for public use for the amount of \$3375. The town sold bonds on July 3, 1922 to George J. Hoevet, the only

bidder. Bill Purdy was also an owner after Mr. Hoevet. Oakland Park was the scene of many Labor Day events, baseball, picnics, etc. It is believed that Will Love was the original owner.

With the building of the Lowell Elementary School, the school system needed more acreage and asked the town to sell Oakland Park to them. On Sept. 6, 1955, the Lowell Town



**Tom Sullivan**  
**Park Superintendent**

Trustees passed an ordinance to sell Oakland Park to the Trustees of Cedar Creek Township for public purposes in the amount of \$12,000.

So again the Town of Lowell was in need of a public park. There existed nine acres of land with a nice pond and evergreen trees already perfect for a park. Thus Evergreen Park came into existence. On Nov. 22, 1955, the board purchased the land for \$12,000 from Augusta and John Norcutt and Marie Knoblich and Harry Anderson. Since then Evergreen Park has been very active with scout outings, family reunions, clubs and organizations, not to mention the everyday activities of all ages.

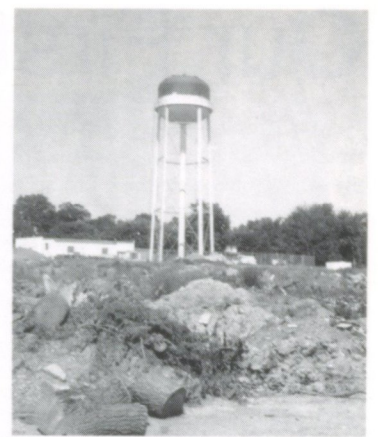
Now with a park and more people moving into town, the need for a park and recreation board became apparent. On Jan. 8, 1968 the Town Board formed the first Lowell Park and Recreation Board with Robert Earley as chairman. Other members were Wilbur Schwanke, James Johnson and Rodney Roadruck.

Bill Langen, developer of Indian Heights Subdivision, donated four lots for a park on Nov. 4, 1968. At this time the board began to think of state and federal funds for the parks. They found they were not eligible unless they were organized under the 1965 Park Act. On May 4, 1970 the Town Board passed an ordinance reorganizing the Park Board under the 1965 Act. On Sept. 14, 1970 the new Park Board was formed with Wilbur Schwanke as president. Other members include Ronald Weitbrock, Robert Lynn, Penelope Morrison and Wayne Metz.

P.A. McNay owned property on the west side of the old Monon Railroad along Washington Street with Liberty Street along the west boundary and Main Street along the north side. He left this property to his son, P.M. McNay, who had helped him run the coalyard. P.M. McNay sold it to A. LaMotte in the early 1930s. Then Herbert Cunningham bought it in 1945 for \$15,000. The Town of Lowell bought the parcel of land on Sept. 2, 1970 for future wells to provide water needed for the town, the remaining land to perhaps become a park. Here enters the final park owned by the Town of Lowell. The park board was given the land on April 15, 1974. The Park Board applied for federal funds and in February, 1976, federal funds were approved on a 50-50 basis. Liberty Park is a three-year project with a total cost of \$92,523. Construction began in early April of 1976. The park is an asset to Lowell and the surrounding area.









# Our First High School

In the 1860's, barely a decade after the founding of Lowell in 1852, the citizens were standing proud by their new school building on Main St. in Lowell, on the same site as the present old school building east of the the building that now houses the Lowell Town Hall.

Rev. T.H. Ball, Lake County historian and pioneer, wrote the following in 1872: "The school house at Lowell is of brick, a large two-story building, the largest and best furnished school house in the county. Cost of house and furniture, \$8,000."

Melvin Halsted, the founder of Lowell, who was very interested in proper education, supervised the construction.

From a faded photograph, it's a guess that the building was about 75 feet in width, with twelve large windows on the wings, one larger window over the door, and a decorative bell tower on the roof. (This building was demolished to make way for the larger school building still standing on the site.)

Recently the Three Creeks Historical Assn. received, as a gift, a large leather bound book which contains reports of the teachers from that old school, beginning with the year 1887. Very fine records were kept for the eight lower grades and for the two high school classes.

That year C.A. Segur was superintendent, and he also taught all the high school classes in one room. Other teach-

ers listed were Frank Doak, Sada Starr, and Alice George. In each of the four rooms, attendance varied from 40 to 60, with a total enrollment of 225, while the list of students greatly resembled a roster of local pioneer families.

Students from these early families were listed: Lynch, Spindler, Clark, Burnham, Mee, Slayton, Post, Purdy, Berg, Ackerman, Bacon, Garrison, Brannon, Shurte, Nichols, Gragg, DeWitt, Taylor, Dickey, Vosberg, Wood, Pattee, Ragon, McNay, Castle, Hepp, Hayden, Hack, Ashton, Burhans, Ceiga, Bryant, Turner, Halsted, Bisig, Staff, Minninger, Farwell, Henry, Cleaver, Wood, Rumsey, Maxwell, Klein, Palmer, Gordon, Bixenman, Miller, Ennis, Gregg, Kimmet, Driscoll, Viant, and Ault, all names that have been mentioned in the "Pioneer History" column through the years.

The following notation was on one of the pages for the 1887-88 term: "During the year, one was removed from out school by the hand of death, Edith Viola Halsted, Died May 7, 1888, aged 11 years, a pupil of grade five, room two." She was the daughter of Theron Halsted, the son of Melvin Halsted.

For the 1888-89 term, the high school was extended to three years, with Freshman, Junior and Senior classes, still all in one room. A new list of teachers included G.A. Hawkins, superintendent and high school teacher, Lizzie Grant, Mary Sargent, and Belle Livingston. Sub-

jects taught in high school were: history, algebra, arithmetic, geometry, Latin, rhetoric, physiology, physics, literature, composition, bookkeeping and penmanship.

Of the 49 students in the high school room, 15 of them were not promoted! But this was sometimes due to the lack of attendance, for many of the older farmer boys stayed home on the farm some days to do the chores and harvest the crops. In other rooms, grade school pupils were also on a long list of those not promoted.

Geology was soon added to the high school agenda. There were notations in the old volume stating that some of the students not living in Lowell paid a tuition of \$1.50 for six weeks.

The following were listed in the Senior Class of 1890: Ruth Bacon, Maud Sherard, Lottie Field, Etta Clark, Albert Post, Achilles Davis, and Urvie Spindler. The Superintendent's report for that year showed a total enrollment of 248, with the daily attendance down to 159, time loss by tardiness, 1,103 minutes, 30 days loss by sickness; only 115 promotions made; and 9 pupils paid a total of \$68.50 for tuition.

The 1891 high school graduates were: Ruby Bacon, Winnie Death, Blanche Dickinson, Maud Sanger, Bertha Maxwell, and Bessie Purdie. The graduates in 1892 were J.W. Belshaw, Mabel Purdy, Lillie Wood, and Gracia Nichols.

Teachers in 1892 were Lizzie Grant, 'Miss Gordon' and 'Miss Little.' The 1893 graduates of the three-year high school were: Lola Ragon, Lucy Smith, and Ada Sanger. W.A. High was superintendent.

Frank F. Heighway took over as their leader in the fall of 1893, when the school term started on Sept. 25 and ended May 18.

One entry shows that a lad of 17 "remained in grade six," and one 14-year-old girl remained in grade five. Most of the first graders that year were "put back" in the same class the following year, evidently due to an epidemic, for they were shown on the attendance records as absent during most of their first year in school.

The total enrollment for 1893-94 was 270, with the average daily attendance at 199, and only 133 promoted. The Class of 1894 included

Helen Putnam, Chas. W. Warner and Ruie Post. Teachers were Lizzie Grant, Grace Gordon, W.L. Sanger and A.G. Slocomb.

A note written by Heighway in the 1894-95 records stated: "Prevalence of mumps during three months greatly affected the attendance and caused some to withdraw from the school."

The Class of 1895 included: Alice Ebert, Edith Ebert, Zada Ackerman, Anna Johnson, Daisy Dinwiddie, Ethel Nichols, Jessie Hill, and Mamie Hill. Of the total 1895 enrollment of 273, only 172 promotions were made.

In the fall of 1895 school began on Sept. 9 and closed in the spring on May 8. The following were in the Class of 1896: Maud Hoshaw, Pearl Nichols, Dollie Lee, Mary Bixenman, Mamie Nichols, William Davis and Clyde Foster. Of the 278 enrolled, 162 were promoted.

Again quoting from Rev. Ball, who wrote in 1896: "In Lowell a twelve thousand dollar school is going up rapidly, which, if not the largest and most costly in the county, is expected to be equal to any in modern style and convenience."

Because of the change in moving up to four years of high school, there was only one graduate in the year 1897, William D. Davis. The 1898 class of the four-year high school included Goldie Nuckles, Emma Miller, May Lawrence, Ray Nelson, Frank Love, Frank Stuppy, Herbert Michael (he never missed a day of school that year) and Albert Hayden. For the school year ending in 1898, there were 322 enrolled, with average attendance of 247, and 198 were promoted.

The graduates from 1899 were: Everett Axline, Lucretia Castle, Jessie Dearh, Gretna Norton, Georgia Norton, Bernice Nelson, Calvin Pixley and Morton Northrup. In all, 350 students were enrolled.

For 1900 the graduates were Benjamin Lynch, Harry Sanger, Judson Sander, Hal Viant and Fred Tillotson.

The old book containing these reports was furnished by Charles Van Nada of Lowell, and is now available to interested readers at the Lowell Public Library. A list of the Lowell High School graduates from 1890 and thereafter can also be found in the old Lowell High School yearbook, "Echos of 1921."



Lowell Elementary and High School built in 1896.



Lowell High School after peak was removed.



Third Lowell High School in 1916.



# The 1896 Lowell High School

## *Articles sealed in stone unearthed 90 years later*

On Aug. 1, 1896, a large crowd of Lowell area residents gathered to witness the laying of the cornerstone of the first Lowell High School building. Many of the participants were members of the pioneer families of Lowell. Edward P. Ames of Colfax Masonic Lodge 378 of Lowell was appointed deputy grand master for the occasion, assisted by officers and members from Crown Point, Hebron, Hobart and Merrillville. Joseph Clark, the first master of the Colfax Lodge, was also serving as master in 1896.

Over fifty articles were proudly placed in a copper box and sealed within the granite stone during the ceremony.

Nearly ninety years later, on Jan. 18, 1986, this fine stone was carefully opened by the owner of the Main St. building, Edward Zunica. Richard Schmal, historian of the Three Creeks Historical Assn., was invited to attend as an observer.

Sadly, the two men looked upon the remnants of those articles so carefully sealed within the stone years ago. Many of the documents were heavy with moisture and decay, and some were only crumbled piles of brown paper. The well-sealed stone had somehow drawn moisture through the years.

The sadness turned to joy when some of the articles were found to be in fair condition, and able to be restored. Two newspapers, a Lowell Tribune of July 24, 1896, and a Crown

Point Register, dated July 30, 1896, are still legible.

Also found was a 1881 one-cent coin with "Louis Berg, P.M. 1896" engraved on one side. Berg was the Lowell postmaster at the time.

There was a business plate engraved "E.J. Pixley, Jeweler." None of the business cards were saved, however.

Among several coins was a Columbian half-dollar, minted during the Chicago World's Fair of 1893. A metal match safe was in fair condition. One interesting item was the vial of black pills placed inside by George Waters, druggist. There was a bit of paper with the vial which read, "Jaynes Sanative Pills," a laxative and cureall. Waters was the builder of the present Colfax Lodge building, and had his drug store there earlier before it was lost in the big fire of 1898. A lapel button placed by Will Nichols, a member of the Grand Army of the Republic, survived the years intact.

A very important manuscript was found, wrapped carefully with a colored ribbon, in a very delicate condition. This 17-page document is a history of Lowell from its beginning to 1896, composed by Lowell Tribune newspaperman H.H. Ragon. Proper care was given these pages; they were enlarged on a modern copier and are now legible for the most part. The manuscript is being prepared for publication soon.

The last decade of the 1800s was apparently an era when the citizens of Lowell banded together to form clubs and organizations, for many of the rosters which had deteriorated in the copper box were for groups founded in the 1890s. Many of those rosters, however, were also included in Ragon's story. Some of the rosters destroyed were from the Colfax Lodge Knights of Columbia, Fleur De Lis Temple Pythian, Odd Fellows, K of P, Grand Army of the Republic, Cedar Creek Trustees, and the Monon Time Table. The time table is also shown in one of the restored newspapers.

Also decayed was a program from the First Annual Commencement of Cedar Creek Township District Schools, a Duplicate School Bond, the H.H. Purdy Family Record, a Chicago World's Fair ticket from 1893, a note from the H. Dickinson Family, an application for Lake County Farmers Mutual Ins. Co., a builders contract for the old schoolhouse, cards from the Jacob Baughman Family, and a muster out roll from J.A. Clark.

Two former campaign buttons for the McKinley presidential election were only rusted circles of metal when unearthed. A public display of the items is being planned for the month of April at the Lowell Public Library.

The following is a tidbit extracted from the story by Ragon: "In the year 1836, four persons built cabins within

the present limits of Lowell. Of these early settlers who had no thought of a town being built here (sp) at that time, all so far as we have any knowledge have passed to the great beyond, but Mr. Nichols, who little dreamed that he should, sixty years later, be present at the laying of the cornerstone of such a magnificent structure dedicated to the uses of education."

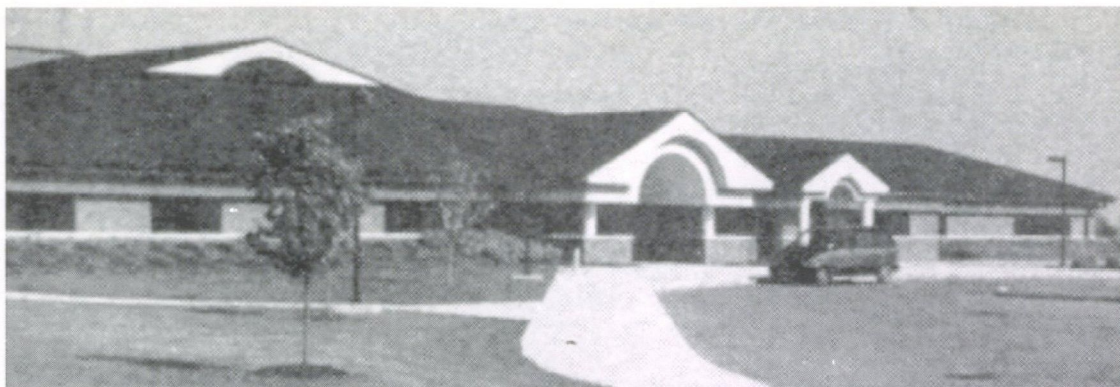
The 1896 building, used for both a high school and grade school, was completed at a cost of \$14,000, and was first occupied in November 30, 1896. During the erection of the building, the following composed the School Board: W.L. Handley, president; E.R. Bacon, treasurer; and George Waters, secretary. William Sheets was one of the early superintendents, D.A. Norris served as a principal, and Luella Fuller was the assistant principal. Among the early teachers were Winifred Deathe, Anna Sheets, Clifford Wiley and Elizabeth Grant.

In the fall of 1896 William Sheets became the superintendent, with a total of 321 students. In the year of 1896 a new school was being built, and again the whole area was proud of their new "house of learning." Colfax Lodge 378 of Lowell, with Edward P. Ames as deputy grand master, conducted the cornerstone laying ceremonies on Aug. 1, 1896. The old school, remodeled over the years, has survived without its original steeple over the bell tower. Now privately owned, it has been used by antique dealers for more than a decade.



Right: Three Creeks Elementary School in 1993.

Below: Lowell High School in 1944.



## Tri-Creek School Corporation

*Schools, the backbone of any hometown, are a measure of a community's commitment to the future. They become a focal point for family life as well as provide cultural and sporting events for everyone.*

Lowell families are served by the Tri-Creek School Corporation. Many students live within walking distance of their school, giving families all the benefits of easy access to school facilities and activities.

Tri-Creek School Corporation serves students from three townships totaling 18,000 residents. Oak Hill, Lake Prairie, and Three Creeks elementary schools share a combined enrollment of about 1,325 students in grades kindergarten through fifth. The language arts, mathematics, and sci-

ence curricula are complemented by participation in physical education, art and music instructed by teaching specialists in these areas. Elementary education stresses the development of the child as an individual with unique needs and potential, as well as acquisition of specific knowledge and skills.

Middle school students receive a unique junior high school experience at Lowell Middle School which follows a school-within-a-school plan. This grouping allows teachers to get

to know their students very well. This attention helps guide students to academic and social success.

Lowell High School students enjoy a wealth of academic, vocational, and athletic opportunities including advanced placement courses. The excellent facilities serve an enrollment of over 950 students and include a theater-in-the-round, music, art and business centers, and an athletic complex. The school library contains 10,300 volumes, two computer labs and a media center.





## First School Board Elected

*Sixteen varsity sports are offered – 50% for girls, 50% for boys  
Focus remains on continually growing honors programs*

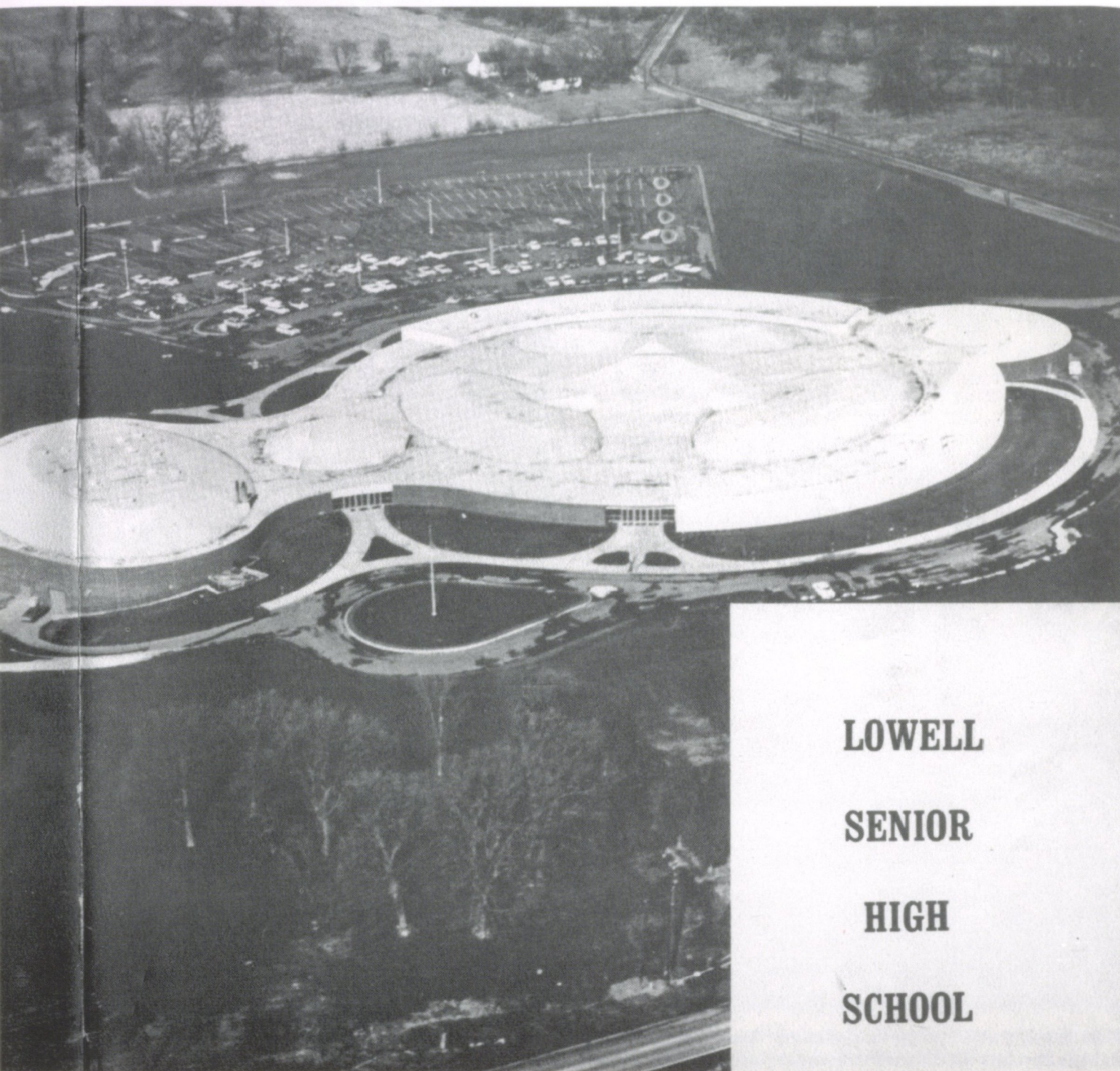
Until April 1, 1884, the Township Trustees controlled the schools of Lowell, but at that date the town was separated from the township for school purposes.

When the first School Board including John E. Davis and P.D. Clark was elected in 1884, there was a smaller school house on the same lot as the present old school house on Main St. The smaller brick building held both grade and three-year high schools. In 1896 the present building was erected on Main St., and the high school was extended to four years.

## Lowell Offers Educational Diversity

*Sixteen varsity sports are offered – 50% for girls, 50% for boys  
Focus remains on continually growing honors programs*

Lowell's public schools provide for a variety of needs and interests. The Tri-Creek Merit program provides challenges for academically able students, grades 3-12. Students with special needs are served by the Northwest Indiana Special Education Cooperative. The high school offers a curriculum of 177 credits, including Advanced Placement Credits in chemistry and biology. Available at only two schools in Indiana, an Air Force R.O.T.C. program provides an introduction to the military.



**LOWELL  
SENIOR  
HIGH  
SCHOOL**



# Lowell Public Library Staff

Director .....	Francine Shreffler
Assistant Director, Indiana, Genealogy .....	Barbara Zink Berkey
Business Administrator .....	Sandy Morgan
Cataloging .....	Beverly Schoon
Circulation Supervisor, Periodicals .....	Loretta Brewer
Childrens Coordinator .....	Heidi Itczak
Computer Resources Manager .....	Lynda Barton
Public Relations .....	Nell Fabish
Reference Head .....	Darlene Rigg
Administrative Clerk .....	Lorna Muth
Book Processor, Branch Liaison .....	Sandra Fuller
Ordering Clerk .....	Carolyn Lindahl
Interlibrary Loan, Library Assistant .....	Lynn Nuss
Clerks .....	Patricia Atherton
	Debbie Blink
	Ruth Bougie
	Bethany Gray
	Kristi Flatt
	Andrea Martin
	Barb Barnes
	Denise Kersey
Custodial Supervisor .....	Mike Smith
Maintenance Consultant .....	Herb Barrus
Assistant Custodians .....	Tom Mitsch
Janitors .....	Linda Clark
	Donna Powers
	Bonnie Lysek
Library Aide--Art .....	Diana Moyer
Summer Aide .....	Mary Braun
Pages--Lowell .....	Renee Bult
	Kelly Flatt
	Jenn Lichtle
	Hania Nammani

## Lowell Public Library Board of Directors

President .....	Tom Johnson
Vice President .....	George Gray
Treasurer .....	Brenda Wunderink
Secretary .....	Mary K Bruce
Other Members .....	William Mitchell
	Kathy Spencer
	Sue Bell



## Schneider Branch

Branch Head .....	Betty Beier
Page .....	Cassie Stavros
Substitute .....	Christine Stavros



## Shelby Branch

Branch Head .....	Eleanor Bartz
Branch Courier, Maintenance .....	Waldo Bartz
Pages .....	Jackie Kirkland
	Hayley Peddy



First Lowell "Public" library located in the "Towne Square" funded in large part by a 1920 donation from the Carnegie Corporation.



Opened in 1973, the new 9,600 square foot library on the corner of Fremont and Main Streets served the Lowell community for over 20 years before moving to its present location. The Lowell Town Hall is now housed in the Fremont and Main building.





# Lowell Public Library History

From the "Lowell Public Library Dedication Ceremony" booklet, Nov. 7, 1993: In 1904, the Lowell area had a small subscription library of 500 books. Members paid dues and borrowed books free of charge.

The Lowell Library was organized in 1917 and consisted of two small rooms housed on the second floor of Lizzie Davis' hat shop.

The Lowell "Public" Library (one that is supported in whole or in part by local taxation) became a reality in 1920 through the hard work of local residents and a large donation from the Carnegie Corporation. The new (one-and-a-half story) library was typical of Carnegie construction.

Located in the "Town Square," it contained 4,000 square feet and by the late 1960s had become severely overcrowded.

August 12, 1968, marked the date for the groundbreaking of the new 9,600 square foot library on the corner of Fremont and Main Streets. The site was designed for twenty-eight parking spaces. Opening on December 8, 1969, in many ways the building served the community well for almost twenty-five years.

As the area grew (54% between 1970 and 1990) and circulation of materials increased (135% from 1985-1992), workspace for library staff began to take up more and more public reading room area.

Additional shelving was installed to accommodate the increasing book collection and more tables were needed for audio-visual materials and computers. Comfortable seating areas for library patrons and room for a growing collection were no longer possible. Surveys of the community determined a need for even more materials, programs, and services than the library could handle at its present facility.

In 1987, a Long-Range Planning Committee (made up of the library board, staff, community business persons, and area residents) was formed to plot the course for the library's future. One of the objectives cited in their report was to analyze building needs.

Over the next three years, alternative studies were conducted to determine the cost and feasibility of expanding the existing building. When all the results were in, it was decided that if an addition were built at its present location, the library would still lack parking space and would be landlocked should further expansion be needed. The planning for a new library began.

In November 1994 the new library was built in its present location on Commercial Ave. The state-of-the-art facility has room for expansion and ample parking.



The rear entry to the library built in 1994 on Commercial Avenue.



Opened in November 1994, the new library is located on a large lot set back from Commercial Avenue. The new location boasts a nicely wooded area, larger parking lot and multiple conference and resource areas.



# Early Mail Routes

## *Detroit-Fort Dearborn route ran along Lake Michigan shoreline*

News from the eastern states traveled very slowly to the pioneers of southern Lake County. Mail from relatives and friends took many weeks to arrive at the homes of the 1834-35 settlers, some of it sent with those just starting out from the East as settlers themselves.

There was one established route at that time, running along the beach of Lake Michigan in northern Lake County, called the Detroit-Fort Dearborn run, with coaches following the shoreline of Lake and Porter Counties on their way to what would become the City of Chicago.

Fort Dearborn, situated on the Chicago River, was built in 1803, destroyed by Indians in 1812, rebuilt in 1816, and was maintained until 1837. It was chiefly a military post and fur trading station until 1830 and became part of Chicago in 1837.

Mail came a little closer to the pioneers when, in 1835 and 1836, the town of Liverpool (three miles south of Hobart) was settled and the Detroit-Fort Dearborn run turned from the beach and stopped at the new village, "which was on the great route of travel" (now US 6).

In July 1836 the United States Congress established a mail route from Toledo, Ohio, by way of Lima, Ohio, and the Indiana towns of Bristol, Carrollton, Elkhart, Mishawaka, South Bend, LaPorte, Morgan Prairie in Porter County, and several stations in Lake County on the way to Joliet, Ill. In part, this route followed the present-day US 20.

During the same session of Congress, another route was proposed from LaPorte to Joliet. Still another went from Indianapolis by the way of Frankfort, Delphi, Monticello and Jasper County to Michigan City.

Another mail route established about that time (1836) is shown on an old map and was called the "Peoria Mail route." It had its beginning at Michigan City, traveled through Bailey Town, Deep River, Merrillville, Crown Point, Cedar Lake, and ran about two miles west of Lowell, heading for the crossing of the Kankakee River at the rapids in Momence, Ill., and then on to Peo-

ria. This was the planned route, but according to early history books the plan was not followed. Four-horse coaches were to be used on the entire route, from Michigan City to Peoria, Ill.; these were not used. Young riders on horseback rode a portion of the route, that from City West, near Michigan City, to the West Creek Post Office. Two known post offices were in existence through the years in the West Creek area – one at the site of the "old Ervy Brown farm," and another on the Bailey Estate, called the "Lantus Post Office."

In July 1838 another mail route was started from Logansport to Winamac, rode through Sherwood's Ferry on the Kankakee in Porter County, and on to City West by way of Valparaiso. The Peoria route mentioned above sometimes took another route in this area, coming down from Deep River to Robinson's Prairie northeast of Lowell, and then into Illinois. In 1838 a short route was also used from Crown Point to West Creek.

H.S. Pelton, who later became a Crown Point businessman, was one of the mail carriers on the route from LaPorte to Joliet, the principal route for many years for the central part of Lake County. He also carried the mail from Monticello, but that line was discontinued.

Congress had not studied the geography and history of the Kankakee Marsh and its broad valley, and of the counties of Iroquois, Newton, and Jasper. "The route was afterward found to be through such an interminable wilderness that it was discontinued," says historian T.H. Ball.

By 1847 seven post offices were in operation in Lake County. The mail was delivered twice a week from LaPorte to Joliet and supplied the Crown Point office on the way. A mail route went once a week from West Creek to 'Valpo,' and on to City West.

In 1850, with the beginning of the railroads, postal stations were located along their route, within the limits of the county, and citizens were soon happy to receive daily mail. The Michigan Central Railroad established a stop at Lake Station and a daily stagecoach started running between there and

Crown Point, by way of Merrillville (old name, Centreville). Branches were soon extended, more railroads were built, "Hack lines" carried the mail between stations, and the postal facilities of Lake County compared well with the best in the nation.

The steam whistle of the first train at Lake Station was heard in 1850, when the population of Lake County found itself connected to their friends and relatives on the Atlantic Seaboard by both rail and wire communications – the beginning of a new era. Railroads soon replaced most of the shipping done by the slower oxen and horsedrawn wagons.

In the 1870s John Wilkinson, son of 1834 pioneer Judge Robert Wilkinson of West Creek, was driving a stagecoach between Lowell and Crown Point. Lawyer Schuyler C. Dwyer of Lowell wrote many years ago: "I came to know him (Wilkinson) to be fatherlike, friendly and good natured, as I had occasion with my parent's family to be passengers in his two horse drawn commodious and comfortable well-fitted public stage, running between Lowell and Crown Point by way of Tinkerville, now Creston." The stage run took an average of two hours each way, owing to the early dirt roads and bad weather conditions.

The following is from an 1872 Lake County history book: *About 1843, "Outlet Postoffice" was established and located at a point one mile east of the site of Lowell, with James H. Sanger as Postmaster. He kept it for some years when it was moved to a point half a mile west, kept by Leonard Stringham. Dr. Hunt, H.D. Mudge, Mr. Foote, and G.W. Lawrence each held the office for a time. J.W. Viant took the office in 1858 and held it until Johnson's administration, when Sanford Barlow was appointed. He held it until 1870, when C.P. Post received the appointment." Post was still postmaster in 1872.*

The first Lowell post office was established in 1843 at the area named after the stream coming from Cedar Lake, now called Cedar Creek, called "The Outlet." When Sanger was postmaster, the office was on the grounds

of the present Lowell High School. Other early post offices were at the general store at Orchard Grove, at Pleasant Grove (now a part of Lake Dalecarlia), and the Cedar Lake office at Creston.

Post offices were in stores and other businesses, where townspeople and farmers would come in for their mail and stay awhile to hear all the local news.

As mail service progressed, farmers received their mail on the rural routes by horsedrawn buggies; then came delivery by auto-trains that sometimes "caught the mail on the fly," picking up mail sacks off a pole without stopping.

Towns soon received house-to-house delivery – and soon the trains that made the delivery of mail a daily occurrence gave up the business to the trucking industry.

Some residents of Lowell objected to home mail delivery when it began. They argued that it made obsolete their daily walk downtown to collect the mail and socialize with other postal patrons.

Today Lowell's post office sits on the cabin site of two of the area's earliest pioneers, brothers Horatio and Abram Nichols, who were homesteaders in 1834.







# Telephones

## *1896 Crown Point company connects*

Residents of the area using their modern day telephones may wonder how the system was established.

The Crown Point Telephone Company was organized April 5, 1896, and by 1900 two hundred and forty telephones were in that town, with lines leading out to the Lowell Telephone Company. Lines also went from Crown Point to Leroy to Eagle Creek Township, to Cedar Lake and on to Hammond. From the Lowell Office, there was a connection with Hebron, Valparaiso, LaPorte, Rensselaer and many other places in northwestern Indiana.

At the turn of the century there were 126 toll line stations extending to Logansport, Kentland, Michigan City and Lake Village.

Rev. Timothy Ball, historian, wrote in 1900: "There is a network of telephones all over these counties now, the prediction of which sixty years ago would have astonished the pioneers. It is a wonderful means of communication."

At that time, some of the neighborhoods connected to Crown Point and Plum Grove and some of the farmers could talk with their neighbors or with friends at Lowell and other towns to enjoy the benefit of a personal visit.

The Jasper County Telephone Company, with stockholders Delos Thompson, C.C. Sigler, and others, was organized in 1895, and the con-

struction began in July 1895. Before the end of that year, poles were erected and lines were extended to Remington, Wolcott, Reynolds, Brookston, Chalmers and to Lafayette. The towns, large farms, the cattle ranches along the Kankakee were connected by these "wonderful Telephone wires" with Rensselaer as the center. By the 1920s, not all of the telephone lines were installed in the country near Lowell. Telephone crews came to town with their large hard-tired trucks and stayed all week at the Heiser Hotel on West Commercial, while they worked constructing new lines in the area.

In the Lake County Directory of 1909, Clifford O. Hill is listed as the manager of the Lowell Telephone Exchange, a position he held for many years. The telephone office was on the second floor above the storefront at 418 East Commercial Avenue in downtown Lowell, and a large brick building to the rear was used as a storeroom. The Lowell Exchange, along with most of the other early telephone companies in the area, was taken over years ago by the larger Bell companies.

In 1900 there were over a million telephones in the U.S., and by 1947 that total had climbed to over 31 million, nearly 58 percent of the world's total. Today's cellular phone is quite a change from the old party line phone with a hand crank.



# Visiting the Hallowed Ground of Our Pioneer Ancestors

Rev. Timothy Ball, pioneer historian, wrote the following in 1872: "The manner of disposing of the bodies of the dead marks the kind of civilization which a nation has attained." The bodies of the early settlers of this area were buried as securely as possible, within the earth, in cemeteries scattered throughout the three townships.

In the early 1830s when the first pioneers ventured into southern Lake County, many of the early families buried their loved ones in family plots near their home. Later, when churches and communities were organized, public burial grounds were used.

In the 1950s a survey was made of the cemeteries in the area by members of Julia Watkins Brass Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and all legible stones were listed. This is a very valuable collection of references and was used in compiling this story.

## WILKINSON BURIAL GROUND

One of those small family graveyards was called by historian Ball "The old burial ground near the Wilkinson Place," northwest of Lowell, west of U.S. 41. Rev. Ball saw six stones, and the survey shows

three legible markers, three boulders, and a broken stone. When last seen by the Old Timer, it was covered with brush.

## BELSHAW FAMILY GRAVEYARD

In 1872 the land was owned by S.R. Tarr, and the cemetery was located on a small knoll in front of the old Belshaw homestead near the present village of Belshaw. In 1894, James Brannon, a relative, purchased the property with the understanding that the graves be moved. In 1895 Bert and Charles Belshaw moved the graves to the Sanders Cemetery and to West Creek Cemetery.

## MCCARTY FAMILY PLOT

The McCarty family burial ground near Creston can no longer be seen, since the stones have disappeared and the earth has been plowed. It was a half mile south of Creston, west of the Cedar Lake Rd., and contained remains of the McCarty and Young families, with burials from 1849 to 1853.

## THOMPSON CEMETERY

This long neglected small burial ground was near Creston Rd., and five

burials were listed for the Thompson and the Vinnedge families of the 1850s.

## MOELLER GRAVESITE

This was another small plot near the village of Creston, on the Cutler Farm, with three known burials, including family names of Warriner and Taylor, but no dates were available.

## SANDERS CEMETERY

Ball wrote in 1872 that this was a well-protected plot, but not dedicated to the public, but since that time the site was deeded to West Creek Township by the Sanders Family, pioneers of 1841. A marker there reads: "William Sanders, Emma Harris Sanders, Pioneers who Settled this Section built the first Cemetery to the Township. Centennial Marker 1841-1941 Erected by The Sanders Clan." This well-cared for burial ground was the site of Pine Grove Church, now moved to the east, and was used as a residence on what is now 205th Ave. Graves there are dated from the 1840s.

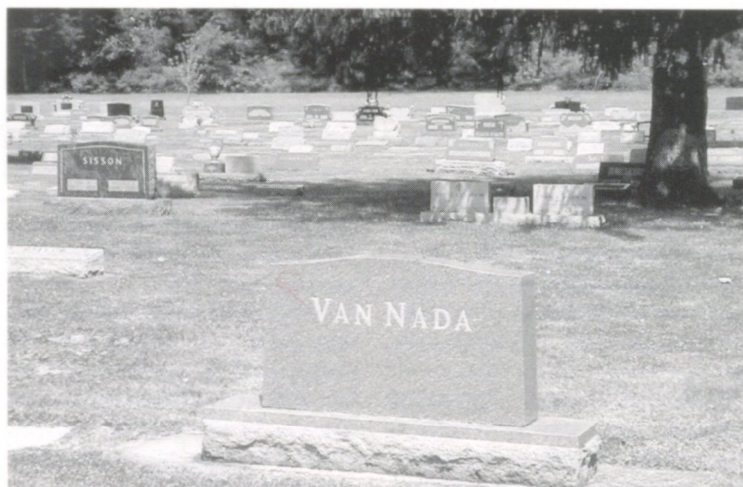
## FULLER CEMETERY

Ball wrote in 1872: "A very retired, quiet resting place over West

Creek on the Fuller place, where the dead of that neighborhood have been buried." This well-care-for burial ground is on a high knoll with a background of trees and bushes following the line of the creek below. Burials here began in the 1850s.

## PIONEER CEMETERY AT CRESTON

During the Fourth of July weekend, the Cedar Lake Historical Assn. sponsored a historical bus tour of the area, which included a stop at the old cemetery near the pioneer church at Creston. The Old Timer had the privilege of being the tour guide this year, and showed the old burial ground, with the grave of LaRosa Taylor Surprise (1801-1876), wife of early pioneer Peter Surprise, and the only known Indian to be buried in Lake County. Historian Timothy Ball is honored there with a large stone, though he is buried in Alabama near the home of his daughter. Many pioneer Cedar Lake and Creston family graves are there, including those of 12 Civil War veterans, among them the only woman listed on the Three Creeks Monument in downtown Lowell - Abbie Ellen Cutler, Civil War nurse. There is a veteran of the War of 1812, and one from the Spanish American War of 1898. Many





stones are marked with the surnames of Taylor and Vinnedge, one having the date of 1846.

### **SOUTH EAST GROVE CEMETERY**

Ball wrote the following in 1872 that South East Grove "is near the school house, near where a church should be built; is fenced and deeded. It contains one of the finest gray marble monuments in the county, erected to the memory of Otto F. Benjamin, a very promising young man who died suddenly at the school house where he was teaching in 1871. Only two burials up to the year 1843." A Cemetery Society was formed in 1850 to manage the plot. Many of the Grove's pioneers lay at rest here in one of the prettiest areas of the county. Ball's wish did come true, in part, for the old school house across the road was also used for church services.

### **WEST CREEK CEMETERY**

Called "The Hayden Burial Place" by Ball, it is a well-kept cemetery on State Rd. 2, west of U.S. 41. When the survey was made in 1956, it listed 55 stones with the Hayden surname near the site of the pioneer Methodist Church. Remains from "The Old Methodist Burial Ground" nearby were moved here, as well as some from the Belshaw family plot. A large stone marks the grave of the founder of Lowell, Melvin Halsted, and that of his first wife, Martha Foster Halsted. He farmed in West Creek Township for a few years before coming to Lowell in 1848. Stones marked as early as 1839 (The Haydens came in 1837) can be seen over the graves

of the West Creek Pioneers.

### **LAKE PRAIRIE CEMETERY**

Situated on a hill at the corner of U.S. 41 and the north junction of State Rd. 2, this well-kept cemetery is on land originally owned by the Morey Family. The DAR listed 202 named graves and 24 illegible or unmarked stones. The graves of the early settlers of the "Yankee Settlement" of the lake community are looked after by the West Creek Trustee.

### **ORCHARD GROVE CEMETERY**

It is near the east junction of SR 2 and SR 55, on a rolling hill, and is well cared for. An old map shows Belshaw Rd. along the north edge of the burial ground, ending at SR 55. Back in 1872 Ball noted that it was a well kept spot. One stone was found with the burial date of 1837, the year Lake County began.

### **PLUM GROVE CEMETERY**

This neat little graveyard in Eagle Creek Township is east of Orchard Grove, and is well maintained. Resting there are the remains of the early settlers of that community, and of the old village of Dinwiddie, now the intersection of I-65 and SR 2. We found stones from as early as 1847.

### **PLEASANT GROVE CEMETERY - LOWELL CEMETERY**

The early pioneer community of Pleasant Grove, was near the south end of Lake Dalecarlia and east of the

'four corners' where the Jones school building still stands (now D.C.'s Country Junction). It was settled by the Bryant family in 1834, and named by one of the family members. Several history books mention burials at the "Pleasant Grove Cemetery," and on many trips to the Lowell Cemetery, the Old Timer noticed the same names and dates on stones in the old part near the highway.

Later, much to his surprise, he read the following notation in the DAR Survey of 1956: "We believed that the area is that spoken for by Timothy Ball in his book Lake County 1834-1872 as Pleasant Grove.

This conclusion is based on the fact that many of the earlier settlers of which he speaks as having been buried in Pleasant Grove or residing there are to be found in this cemetery (Lowell). The cemetery covers an area approximately ten acres and included an "almost completely abandoned mausoleum" (1956).

The old mausoleum, built soon after 1900, was at the corner of the main cemetery road and looked very much like a church. Records show that the first burial in the building was in 1905, the last in 1952. When the building was demolished near the site of the structure, and a few were moved to family plots in the Lowell Cemetery or others.

Many of the Pleasant Grove pioneers are buried at the Lowell Cemetery, including a long list of the 1834 Bryant Family. A "new" addition was added to the Lowell Cemetery in 1907, to the north and to the west. The road along the south and west edge of the graveyard once was

the old state road, called "Harding Highway," and was part of the race track for the 1909 Cobe Trophy Race, the forerunner of the Indianapolis 500.

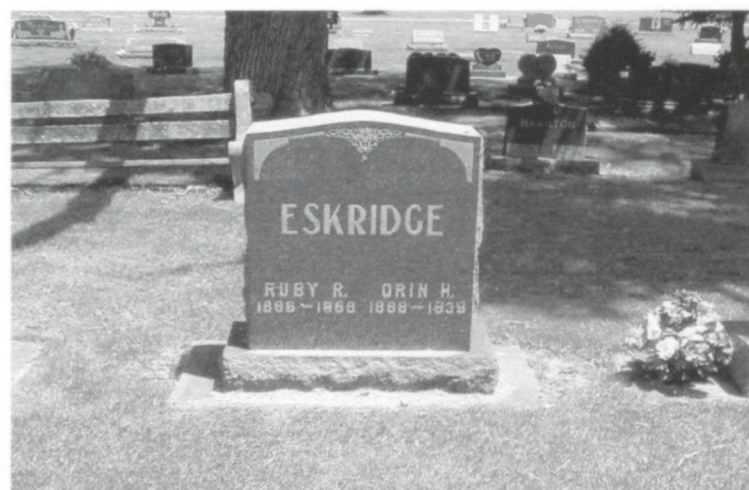
### **ST. EDWARD CEMETERY**

It is on 177th Ave., near Castlebrook subdivision and Burr St. Years ago it was bordered by large pine trees, and was a very secluded place, but it is now bounded on two sides by modern subdivisions. The original plot was purchased for 150 dollars in 1865 on what was called North Ave.

The DAR records show that the graveyard was adjacent to the church, but this is not true, for St. Edwards Church was on Burnham Ave. at the present site of Lowell Healthcare Center. Edward Warren Russell (1824-1903), builder of the first St. Edward Catholic Church in 1870, is buried there. The first recorded burial was in 1882.

Rev. Timothy Ball was looking into the future when he wrote the following in 1872: "When, one hundred years hence, Lake County having become densely populated, a large suburban town having spread out for miles around the present growing village, there will be no ancient quiet churchyards into which observing travelers, and meditative poets, and studious antiquarians may enter and find the resting places of the noted ones of this generation, unless we change the present custom, and the prevailing popular taste."

He was lamenting the moving of the early cemeteries that was taking place at the time. He said: "Let the generations of the future see the very places where our bodies are moldering to the dust."







After three years of preparati

# W (L)owell – (C)edar (L)ake finally goes on the air

On November 24, 1972 the Federal Communications Commission granted William Dunn, a local insurance man, a licence for an FM station to serve Lowell and Cedar Lake.

The licence took three years to get passed because of a number of problems that arose.

The most vexing was that of the placement of the antenna. Originally Dunn had approval to set it up on the edge of town.

In 1969, that was a good idea. Just two years later the area was subdivided, and the new homeowners weren't too keen about sharing their view with an FM tower.

Dunn then asked to lease land at the Lowell sewage plant site and was given town board approval. The new

site had to be approved by the FCC. Such an approval is usually more a formality.

However, the FCC ruled the antenna would be closer than 65 miles to the nearest FM station operating on the station's frequency, and vetoed the proposal.

The Plano, IL FM station is just slightly less than 65 miles from the Lowell sewage treatment plant. So, once again Dunn went site-hunting, finally finding a "home" at the Vic Taylor farm, two miles from town and away from any neighbors.

The former Dunn Insurance Agency was remodelled into studios and staff members were hired. When the station first went on the air it operated 18 hours a day before the op-

eration was expanded to 24 hours a day.

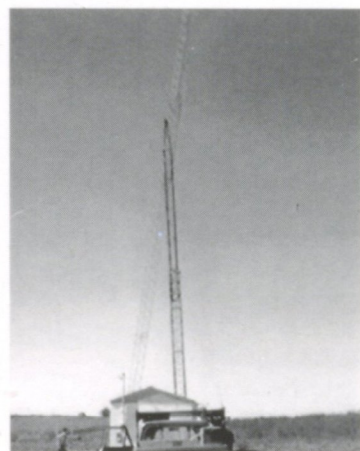
General manager of the station was Paul Wierman, formerly with Radio Station WWCA in Gary, who came to WLCL with 16 years experience in radio work.

The operating manager was Jim Pounds, a graduate of Crown Point High School with four years radio experience and formerly with Radio Station WAKE in Valparaiso.

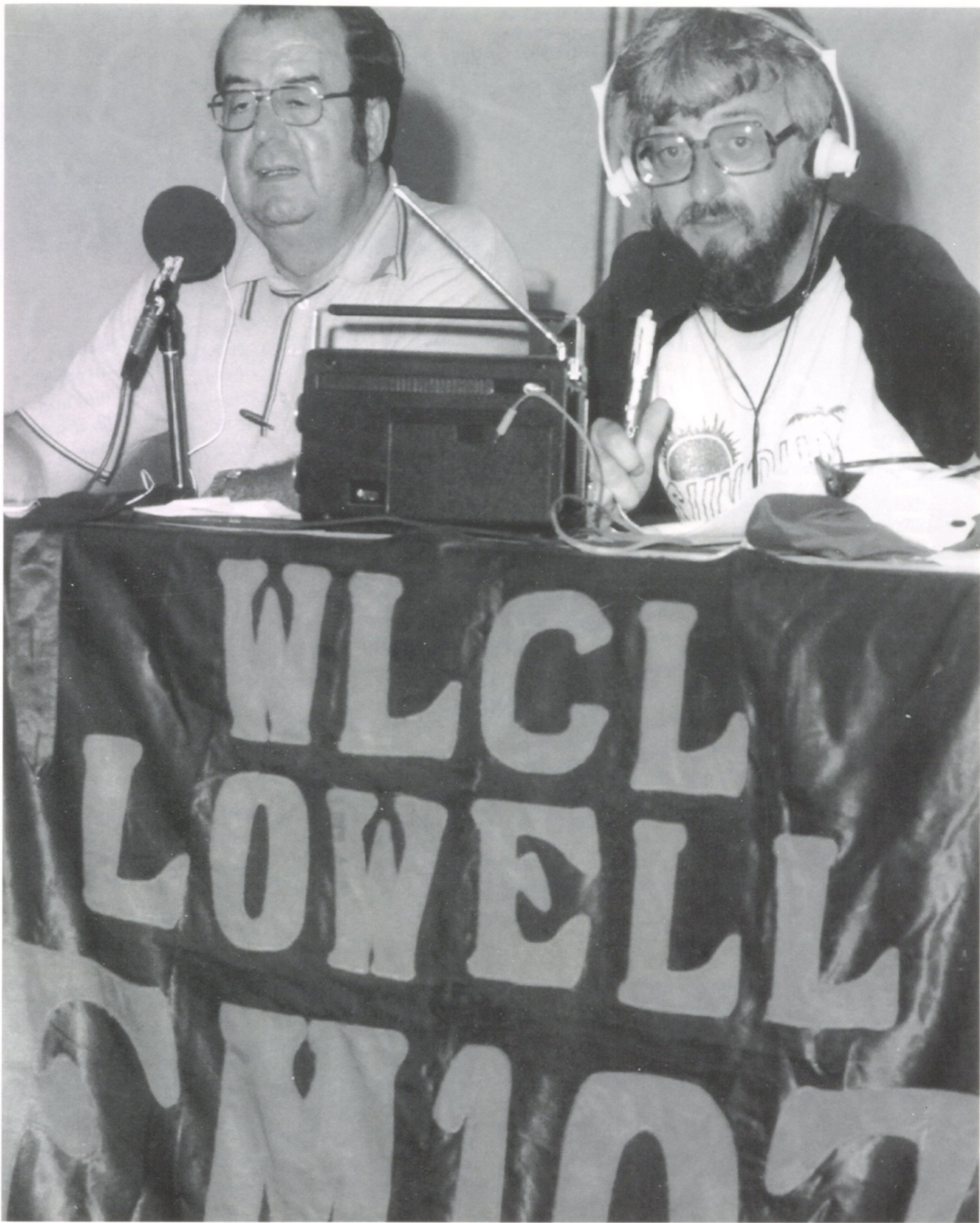
Full-time newsmen were hired and the station fulfilled its hopes of becoming the "Voice of the Lowell Red Devils and Hanover Central Wildcats," with coverage of their sporting events until Whiteco bought the operation and the radio station was closed.



Dunn at his last broadcast.









# Strange, Unusual and Interesting Historic Facts

First Bank President Michael Schrage greets John Black at the branch's 1982 grand opening.



Lowell once had a community swimming pool on the grounds of the VFW Post 6841. This is how it looked in 1969.



*There once was a horse racing 'track' near the west border of the town of Lowell.*

When renting a horse and rig from a livery stable, some of the young men asked for a horse "that knew its way home."

The forerunner of the Indy 500 Race went through Lowell, Crown Point and Cedar Lake in 1909. It was the "Cobe" race, won by Louis Chevrolet of France, who drove a Buick.

*The pioneers used more oxen than horses to pull their wagons.*

Oakland Park was also the site of baseball games played by the "Lowell Stars," a semi-pro team that played against the Chicago Red Sox and the bearded "House of David" teams.

In 1929 George Kimmet, an early Lowell businessman, worked out on paper an invention very much like the helicopter. Manufacturers at the time told him that "the whole thing is impractical."

*The "Lowell Truck" was made here.*

The first post office in the Lowell area was in the Sanger family home, which stood on the lawn of the present high school. It was called "Outlet Post Office," since Cedar Creek is the "outlet" from Cedar Lake.

They drilled for oil in the Shelby area in 1902. They actually found some in the Kankakee Valley area.



Brilliant Bronze Station, owned by Eldon Miller, on Commercial Ave. It is now owned by Lake Tire.



Dante's Restaurant was located on Commercial Avenue.



Ace Hardware opened its doors in Lowell Plaza with a grand opening in 1982.



Water Superintendent Bud Laumeyer, Town Manager James Mandon and Town Councilman Richard Childress display the productivity award from the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns in 1981.



In 1900 it was the duty of the town marshal to blow the steam whistle at the steam powered electric plant on Liberty Street for the 8:30 p.m. curfews.

**Lots for homes on the east side of the tracks at the village of Belshaw were sold when the buyers picked a number from a hat.**

There once was a story told that some of the early pioneer families wrote to their relatives in the east to ask them to send some seeds "from those pretty yellow flowers we had in our yard"? Their relatives obliged, and quickly sent packages of dandelion seeds!

Electric lights were first turned on in the Town of Lowell on June 30, 1897. The power came from a steam generator on Liberty Street, north of the present post office.

The large veterans' memorial on our old town square was erected for \$3,000 in 1905.

The first daily mail service between Lowell and Crown Point began in 1864.

**The Lowell High School football team won 27 games in a row from 1935 to 1938 and that one of the players was an All-American by the name of Corby Davis.**

Soybeans were not introduced into this area until 1915.

There was once a large billboard at the outskirts of Lowell which read: "Drink 'Nature's Tonic' - Lowell's Sulfur Water"

*In 1974 a tornado caused one and a half million dollars of damage in the Town of Lowell.*

Several business buildings in downtown Lowell were built with elevators. Many of the man-powered lifts are still in existence. One was large enough to carry horses and carriages from one level to another.



1969 Chamber of Commerce Officers.



Town and Bank Officials gather for the opening of the Gary National Bank in Lowell Plaza in 1982.



# Then & Now

The interior of Heitzman Haus as a general store in 1925.

The exterior of Heitzman Haus as a general store in 1894.



The building to the west of the Chamber building was built in 1891 for the Wiggin's Bank. A story is told that the Wiggins brothers left town on a dark night with the money.

*The Lowell Tribune has been printing since 1885.*

*A large, ornamental cast iron horse tank and fountain once stood in front of the old State Bank building in downtown Lowell. Horses drank from the street side, townspeople from the sidewalk.*

*Cedar Valley Butter was once made in what is now the west part of the Lowell Legion building.*

*Lowell residents once-boasted of a fine old theatre (The Grand), a large building with box seats and a large balcony, featuring operettas, plays and silent movies. It was torn down in 1936.*

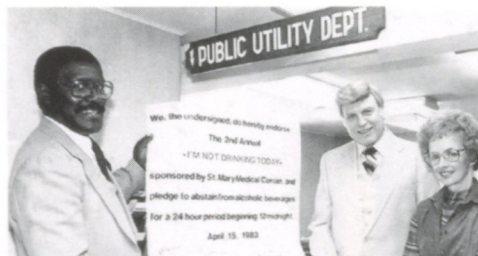
*That Evergreen Park was once a tree nursery. That's the reason for the rows of pine trees there. Another tree nursery was located along Hilltop Drive, and some of its evergreen trees are still growing on the south side of the drive.*

*The "Farmer's Home-Tavern" once stood in the parking lot just to the west of the Pilcher Publishing Co. office on Clark Street.*

*The circular flower garden in Lowell's Olde Town Square was once the foundation for a 100-foot high water storage tower for the first water system.*

*A large steam-powered grist mill, built in 1881 (and demolished in 1927), stood across the tracks from the present Lowell Depot.*

*That Main Street in Lowell was planned by founder Melvin Halsted to be the prominent business street. When the county built what is now S.R. 2, or Commercial Ave., most of the business places on Main St. moved away from the original "mill district."*

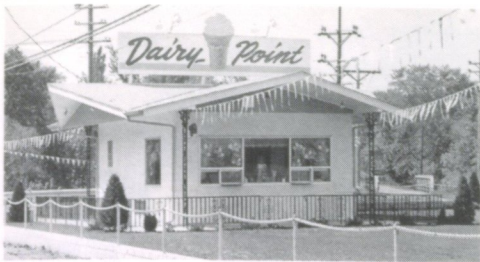


St. Mary's Medical Center sponsored the Second Annual "I'm Not Drinking Today" campaign on April 15, 1983. This card was signed by residents to show their support.



Lowell's downtown business district has undergone numerous changes through the years but remains the heart of the community. It is shown during the 1972 sidewalk sale.





That the area at Cedar Lake formerly called "Coleman's Corner" was planned to be the town of West Point. Very early in our county's history the town was platted, but not started.

The Lowell VFW complex on Morse Street north of Lowell was once the site of Castlebrook Golf Course.



A Lowell Telephone Co. existed.

Commercial Avenue through the Town of Lowell was lined with large oak trees in the parkway in many places. This changed when the road was widened in 1928.

The school building on Main Street in Lowell, built in 1896, was both a grade school and high school until 1915. There was an earlier school on the same site, built in the 1860s.

The old bell now proudly displayed on the lawn of the Lowell Church of Christ on Burr Street came from the belfry of their 1870 church, which once stood on Castle Street.



The original building (above) built c. 1890 is now home to The Last Drop Cafe where customers can enjoy a trendy beverage or snack while on one of the internet-accessible computers. Nancy Frigo bought the building three years ago and renovated it in Dec. 2001 (below).



Lowell's first electrical power (circa 1900) came from a steam-powered generator on Liberty Street, north of the post office.

The Kankakee River was called

**"Thea-Ki-Ki"**

(home of the wolf)  
by the Indians.

One of the largest camps for the Indians at Lowell in the early days is now Liberty Park.

A site in the northwest area of Cedar Lake is still a very large Indian Mound, capped by a cemetery.

# LOWELL, INDIANA

## INDIANS

In the year 1822 all the land north of the Wabash River was owned by the Native Americans. The last of the Lake County land was sold by treaty in 1832, two years before pioneers began to settle.

In 1851, in company with six other men, Melvin Halsted, founder of Lowell was returning from one of his California trips when his group was forced to skirmish with the Indians near Carson Valley.

Indians and pioneers drank from a cool spring along what is now Lincoln Avenue. For many years it was a place to get fresh, sparkling water.

Chief Simon Pokagon (1830-1899), the last Chief of the Potawatomi tribe, was born in Indiana and attended Notre Dame for three years. He mastered the English language and wrote many stories about the Native Americans. Quoting the well-known chief: "Often in the stillness of the night, when all of nature seems asleep about me, there comes a gentle rapping at the door of my heart. I open it and a voice inquires, 'Pokagon, what of your people? What will be their future?' My answer is, mortal man has not the power to draw aside the veil of unborn time to tell the future of his race. That gift belongs to the Divine alone. But it is given to him [mortal man] to judge closely the future by the present and the past."



# By the Numbers

Total money on hand as reported  
by the Town of Lowell in 1911

\$5,456.41

Amount 1871 Lowell ordinance ruled that  
the town marshal would receive per head  
for impounding roaming cattle

17¢

Number of families in the Town of  
Lowell in 1898 according to Rev.  
T.H. Ball, pioneer historian, who  
wrote that he actually rode into town  
and counted the houses

300

Grocery stores in  
the downtown  
area at the same  
time in the 1920s

Charter members in the Union Civil War  
veterans of the Lowell area Burnham Post  
#376 of the Grand Army of the Republic  
(GAR) on Dec. 2, 1883

50

Year Mill Street  
bridge was built as  
an alternative to  
Clark Street to get to  
Cedar Lake

1928

Miles wide the Kankakee  
swamp was in some places  
during pioneer times

10

Price of 1905 men's work shirts  
at George Kimmet's Lowell store

25¢

Years Lowell has  
been a town in  
2002

\$35.00

Cost of a leather-topped  
buggy from the Sears  
catalog in 1902

Acres Cedar Lake covers

800

Person in Lowell High School's 1897  
graduating class (William Davis).  
That was the year that the school was  
changed from three to four years.  
Other years averaged six grads in that era.

6

Banks located in Lake County in 1896 –  
two were in Crown Point, one in Lowell,  
one in East Chicago and one in Whiting

Lake County  
Towns and  
villages in 1889

25



Record number of hours it took 1837 Lake County pioneer James Adams to ride by horseback from Detroit to Chicago. This amazing feat was possible by changing horses every 12 miles.

7:00 p.m.

Time the Three Creeks Historical Association gathers in the meeting room at the Lowell Public Library on the second Wednesday of each month

Hotels recorded in Cedar Lake's history

Voters in Lake County in 1895

Original lots in the Town of Lowell in the area of Main, Mill, Jefferson and Clark Streets that were all the same size and all had alleys for access to barns

Price to build a new house in the south county area during the early 1900s

Price many Lowell homesteaders paid per acre to the United States government for their land

Rate of speed in mph that an ordinance of June 5, 1871, made it unlawful to ride or drive on any streets or alleys in Lowell faster than

Muscrats claimed to be caught by two trappers in the season of 1912-1913 in the Shelby area

Number of towns or cities in the United States with the name of Lowell

Maximum fine for swimming nude in the daylight according to 1871 ordinance

Ducks in one season a man claimed to have killed in the early days of the Kankakee Marsh

Number of stories originally built for one of the buildings destroyed by fire on the north side of Commercial Avenue in 1898

1976  
Year Cedar Lake was incorporated as a town

Size in inches of the first television in the Lowell area, which was installed in 1947 at the appliance store owned by W.R. "Bill" Weaver

The population of Lowell in 1910

1,235

Miles of curves taken out in Lake and Porter Counties when the Kankakee River was dredged in the early part of this century

101

Lowell's American Legion Post

Water capacity in gallons of the water tower in the town square in 1900

Water capacity in gallons of the water tower at Liberty Park today



# We're on the Map

Mrs. Robert Moody, Flag Contest Chairman; Mr. Nelson Clark, Town Board Member; Mrs. Harold Mussman Jr., President



Excerpt from the Nov. 3, 1975 Board of Trustees minutes: Mrs. Harold Mussman, Jr. and Mrs. Faye Moody of the Lowell Junior Women's Club were in attendance to present a newly designed town flag. We have not had a town flag and so the club sponsored a project to have entries judged and the winner to be awarded a prize and have their design become the town flag. The second prize in the contest was donated by the Town of Lowell. Mrs. Charlene Mantz was the winner and her design was made up into a green on white flag that was presented to the town. Mrs. Mussman told the board the first flag made cost \$200 but additional flags may be purchased for \$35 each. Mr. Schutz thanked the club and Mrs. Moody, the chairman of the project. He said he did not think the original flag should be flown outside but a duplicate purchased. The flag will be on display at the town hall.

A large mill pond once covered many acres northwest of Lowell. The Main Street dam held back the waters of Cedar Creek to run the first saw mill in 1848, the first grist mill on Mill Street in 1853, as well as the second grist mill on Main Street at the bridge in 1868. Water rushed down a long, wooden trough to power the Mill Street mill.

## Born and Raised in Lowell

George Belshaw and his sister-in-law Maria Parsons Belshaw - wrote journals that can still be read through the Reference section of the Lowell Public Library about their trip to Oregon on a wagon train that spanned the months of March 23 through Sept. 27, 1853.

*The brightest days for the grand old resort hotels at Cedar Lake were from 1890 to 1930. Dozens of hotels lined the shores, catering to vacationers and picnickers from Chicago and elsewhere.*

*That Belshaw Road from U.S. 41 east past Buckley Homestead was once a State Road.*

*The area that became the Town of Hebron was called "Indian Town" in the early days of Porter County.*

Some of the streets in early Lowell were named after early settlers, most of them businessmen, including Nichols, Halsted, Clark, Castle, Burnham and Viant.

*A very old United States Engineers map showed a depth of 45 feet in a channel near the west shore of Cedar Lake.*



## We'll Claim Him

Harvey W. Wiley – Pure Foods Act and his numerous contributions to agriculture and who opened the first blood bank when the war broke out.

General William G. Haan, a famous officer in both the Spanish-American War and World War One, was from south Lake County.

The Lake Prairie area in West Creek was often called the "Yankee Settlement" in the old history books.

State Rd. 2, until 1928, drove over the railroad at North Hayden, instead of under.

## You Go Girl!

Bobo Rockefeller, also known as Eva Paul in the Lowell High School yearbook, carved a name – or two – for herself in the world of the rich and famous. Eva became a New York socialite and married Richard Sears of the Sears fortune at age 19. After a divorce she married Rockefeller at age 30 and appeared on the cover of "Life" magazine in 1934. Notoriety occurred when she received the largest divorce settlement up to that date of 5.5 million dollars.

An old United States engineers map shows the deepest place in Cedar Lake to be 45 feet. That place was in a channel close to the western shore.

In 1836 Newton County's northern border was just to the south of Cedar Lake. Lake County was established in 1837, and Newton's border was moved to south of the Kankakee River.

A map of the proposed canal system throughout Indiana outlines the six routes:

- No. 1: Ohio Falls Canal;
- No. 2: Wabash and Erie Canal;
- No. 3: Whitewater Canal;
- No. 4: Richmond and Brookville Canal;
- No. 5: Central Canal;
- No. 6: Erie and Michigan Canal.

Numbers 6a, 6b, 6c and 6d were proposed to link the Wabash Valley with Lake Michigan.

The Wabash and Erie Canal and the Whitewater Canal were the only two completed.

The area near 133rd Street and U.S. 41 has had at least three names. The early settlers called it Hanover Center, which changed to Cook, and is now named Town of Cedar Lake.

The pioneer community of "Pleasant Grove" is now a part of the east side of Lowell.

In 1940 "Ripley's Believe It or Not" column featured a drawing of the Little Family Homestead at Newbury, Massachusetts. It was dubbed "The oldest farm in the United States, continually occupied by the Little family for 300 years." The owner in 1940 was Silas Little of the tenth generation to live there, and a relative of the Littles of the Lowell area.



## The Last Laugh

Comedienne Jo Anne Worley, best known for her appearances on "Laugh-In" and "The Gong Show," graduated with club affiliations at Lowell High School in Glee Club, and G.A.A., and was talked about in her senior yearbook as "School Comedienne," and "from the little town south of Creston."



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*Gigi Jackson-Krause, Vice President*  
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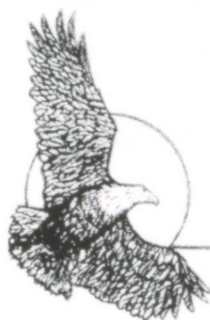
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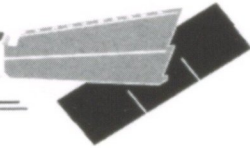
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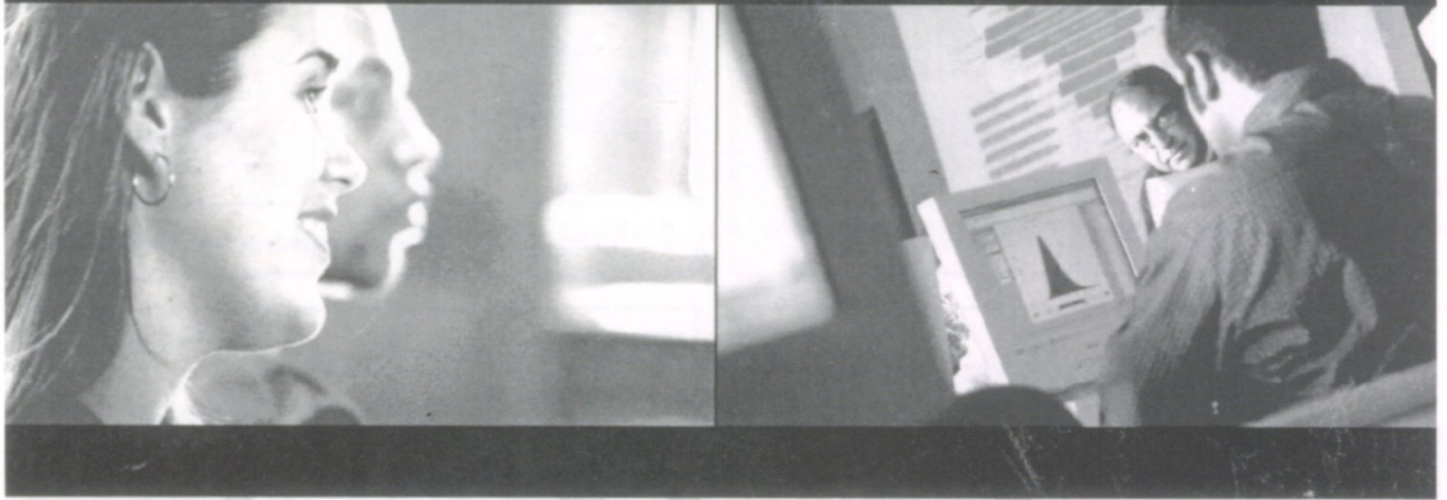
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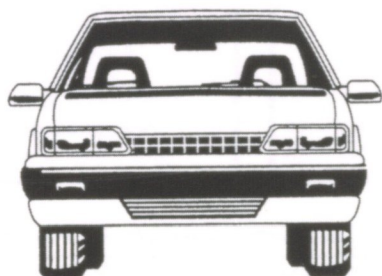




# Lowell Mobil



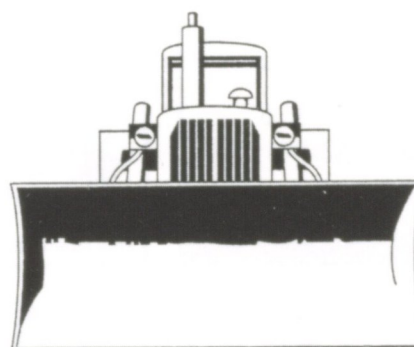
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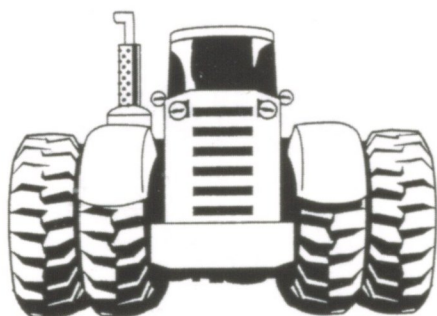
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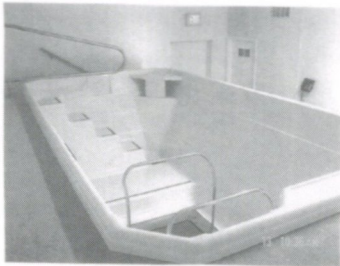
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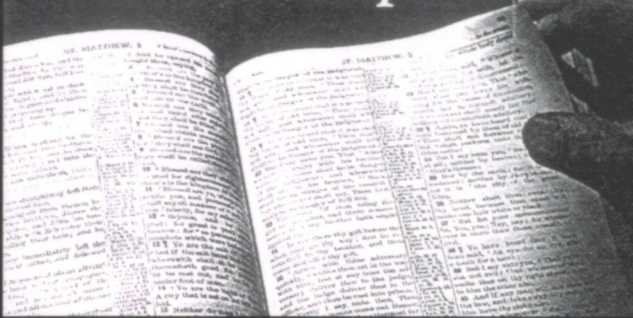




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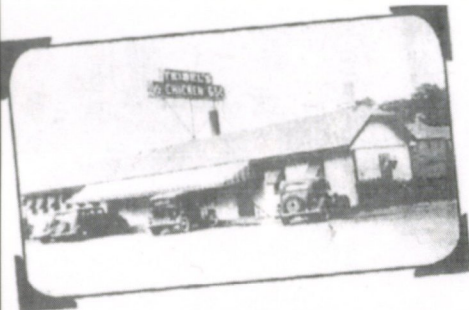
*is like a canvas,*

*whom do you want to*

*hold the brush?*

*St. Edward Parish gives  
praise and thanks to God  
for the blessings  
He has showered  
upon the town of Lowell  
during the past 150 years!*

*Congratulations!*



# *See How We've Changed*

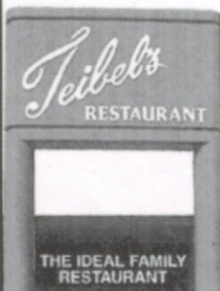


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Photo 1915

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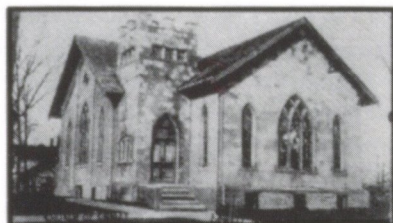


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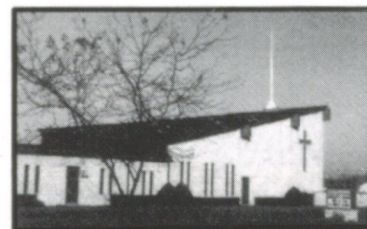


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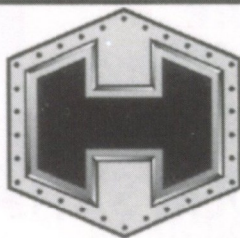
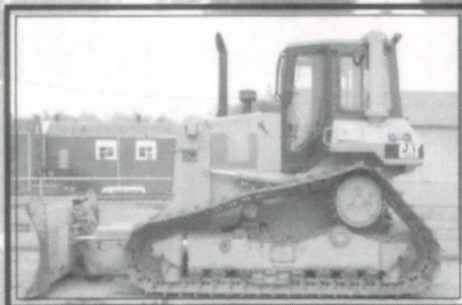
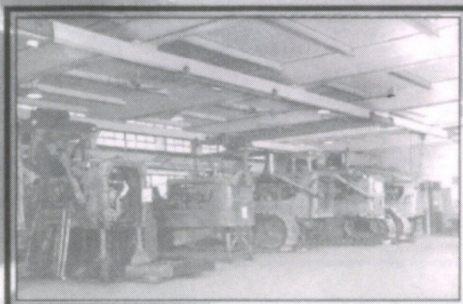
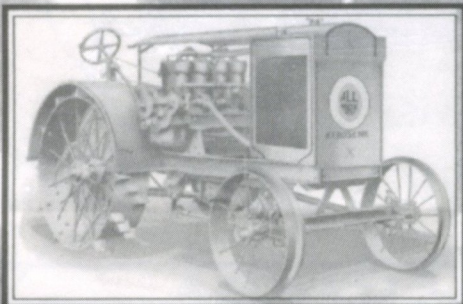




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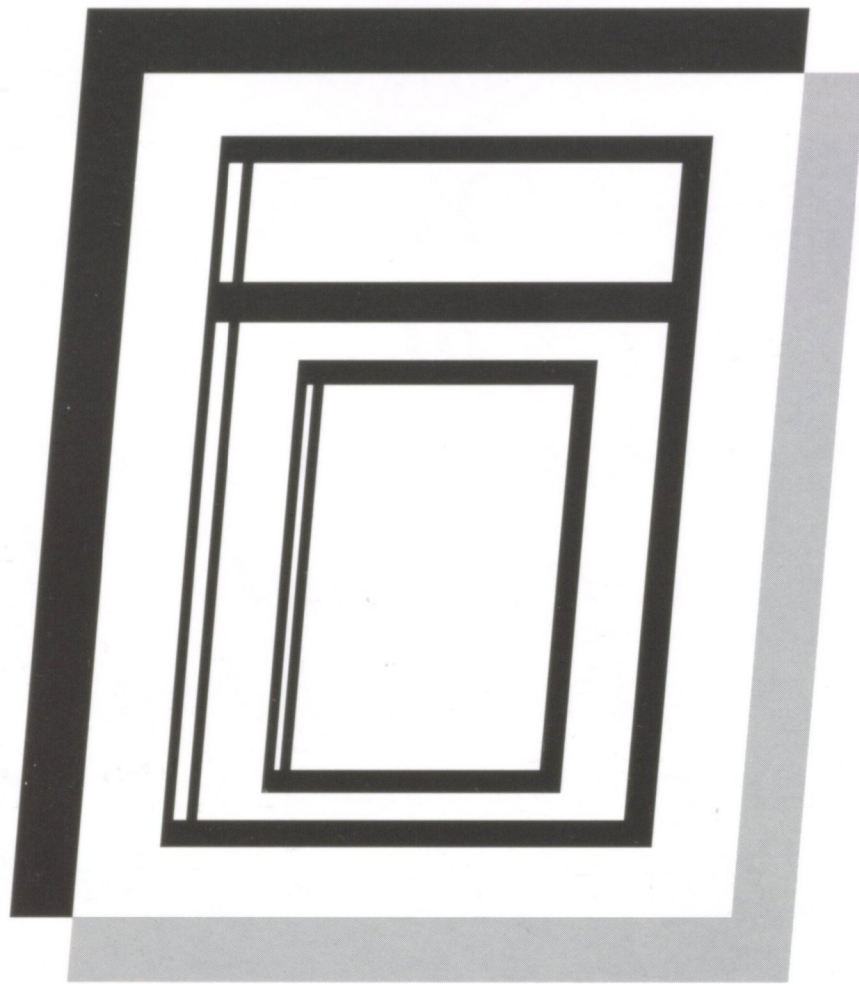
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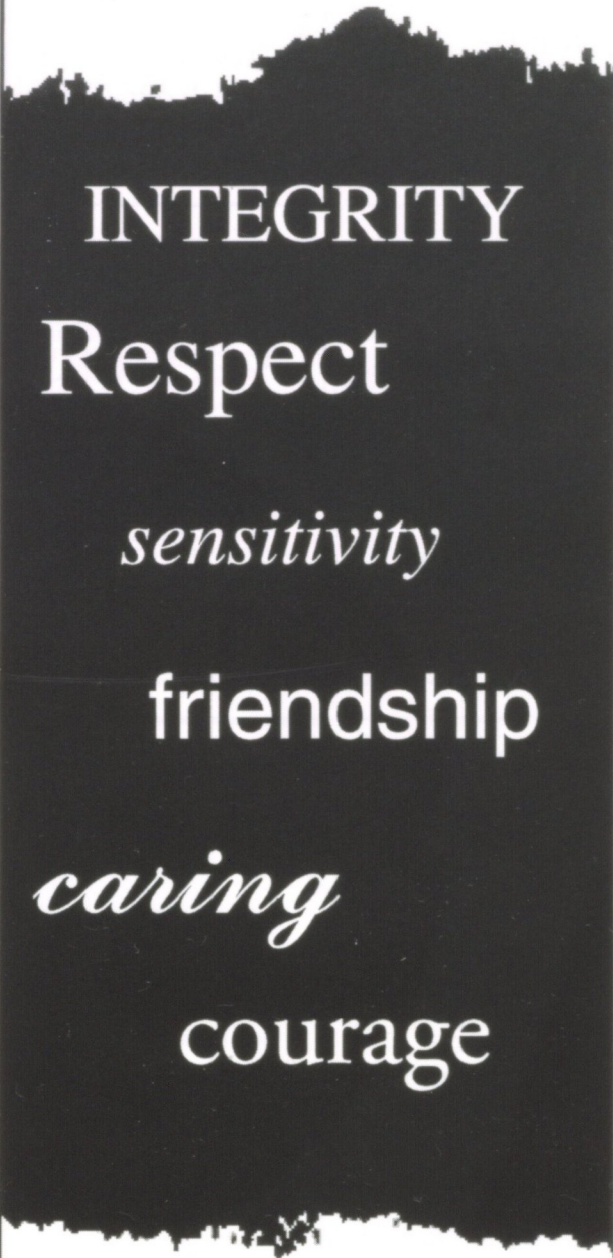
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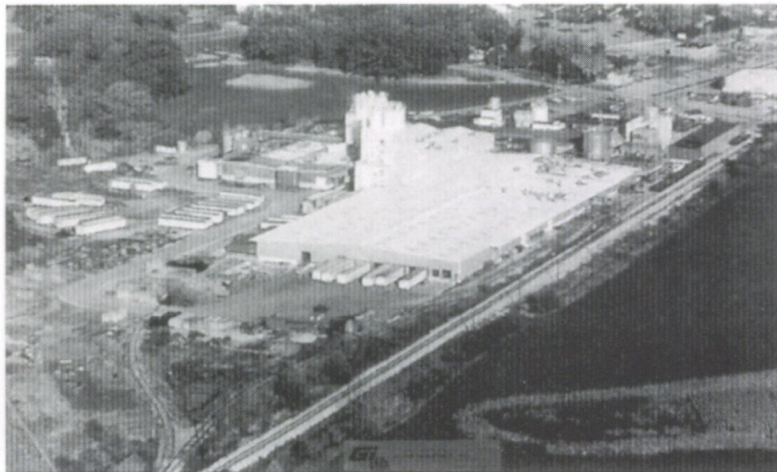
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# 68 Years of Service to the Lowell Community

## Rieter Automotive Systems



In 1934, the country was reeling from the body blows dealt it by the worst depression in world history. Despite bad times, Globe Roofing Products Co., Inc. purchased a plant in Lowell that had previously undergone change of ownership twice in but a few years.

Roofing shingles and products continued to be the mainstay of the company until the 1950's when the plant began to produce granulated siding sheets for buildings. The roofing business was moved to the plant in Whiting.

In the 1960's, Globe became an automotive parts supplier supplying sound deadening material to all the major automotive assembly plants in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

The 1970's brought about continued growth in the automotive industry. The granulated siding product was phased out and the company was purchased by International Bank of Washington, D.C. Plant capacity was expanded by 50% by the addition of a large warehousing and shipping facility.

During the 1980's the plant experienced continued growth and several large manufacturing lines were added for additional capacity. We also began supplying the appliance industry with sound deadening material for washing machines and dishwashers. Ownership changed once again and we were purchased by R.A. Christopher and Kingdon Gould of Washington, D.C.

In 1995, we became part of the Rieter Textile Systems from Winterthur Switzerland and was renamed Rieter Automotive Systems. Our partnership with Rieter has allowed us to become a world presence in the automotive systems market with 40 plants across the world.

This anniversary allows Rieter the opportunity to congratulate its employees and the people of Lowell. After 68 years of Lowell's 150 years existence, we extend our congratulations to the town that is enjoying its Sesquicentennial celebration. May we continue to work together to develop a strong partnership for a greater, more prosperous Lowell, and toward many more years of happiness and success.

### Business Group Americas Plant Locations:

# RIETER

101 West Oakley Avenue  
Lowell, IN 46356

#### North America:

Lowell, Indiana  
Oregon, Ohio  
St. Joseph, Michigan  
Tillsonburg, Ont., Can.  
Chicago, Illinois  
Chicago Heights, Illinois  
Valparaiso, Indiana  
Aiken, South Carolina

#### South America:

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Betim, Brazil  
Sao Bernado, Brazil  
Cardoba, Argentina

Remaining Rieter Plants located  
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**Lowell's Professional Team Salutes Lowell on its 150th Birthday!**



**PETER P. KOHUT, P.E.**

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**Marilyn Karlson**  
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696-9535



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Sales Associate  
696-8533



**Donna Dunham**  
Sales Associate  
696-6105



**Sharon Webb**  
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**Jennifer Cox**  
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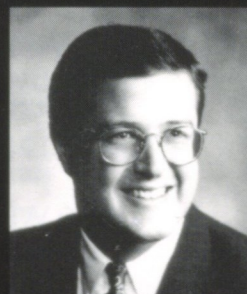
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# THANK

## Founder

### 2001

City of Crown Point .....	\$1,000
Hitzeman, Langen, Russel .....	\$1,000
WhiteCo .....	\$1,000
DeMotte State Bank .....	\$1,000
Commonwealth Engineers .....	\$1,000

### 2002

Chamber of Commerce .....	\$1,000
---------------------------	---------

## Pioneer

### 2000

Konradi Koncrete .....	\$500
Larry Blanchard .....	\$500

### 2001

Lump Insurance .....	\$600
Dr. Pulver .....	\$500
Meadowbrook .....	\$500
Lake County Realty .....	\$500

### 2000

George Van Til .....	\$150
Sickinger's Jewelry .....	\$150
Feitz's Eye Clinic .....	\$200
Spring Run Farm .....	\$150
McNally Dental .....	\$150
Centier Bank .....	\$250
Cheryl Gibson .....	\$150

### 2001

Security Federal Bank .....	\$150
Prime Time Clock .....	\$150
Dr. Krejsa .....	\$150
Lowell Moose .....	\$150
Tri-Kappa .....	\$200
George's Restaurant .....	\$150

### 2002

O'Neil .....	\$300
PC Ideas .....	\$200
Apple Valley .....	\$150
Maintenance Products .....	\$150
S & S U-Lock .....	\$150
H & R Block .....	\$150
Red Devil Wrestling Club .....	\$150
Snell Chevy-Pontiac .....	\$250





# YOU!!!

## Miscellaneous

## Fireworks

### 2000

Economic Development Commission .....	\$2,000
Casey's .....	\$50
Marcia Carlson .....	\$34

### 2001

Financial Solutions .....	\$100
Gleaners .....	\$100
Demotte State Bank .....	\$50.21
Bruce Septic .....	\$100
Economic Development Commission .....	\$2,000
M. Reppert .....	\$25

### 2002

DeMotte State Bank .....	\$61.23
M. Jarret .....	\$20
V. Stinnett .....	\$35
L. Tanner .....	\$100
R. Gunning .....	\$25

### 1999

Bank One .....	\$300
----------------	-------

### 2001

Bank One .....	\$1,000
Reiter .....	\$150

### 2002

Reiter .....	\$1,000
Saco Industries .....	\$2,000
Midwest Grinding .....	\$500
Ashland Products .....	\$150
Avery .....	\$1,500







## LOWELL SESQUICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

501 East Main Street • P.O. Box 157 • Lowell, IN 46356 • (219) 696-7794 Ext. 16

Happy 150th Birthday, Lowell!

It seems like it was just yesterday when then-Town Council President William Dunn appointed me to the Lowell Sesquicentennial Committee. But it was actually more than four-and-a-half years ago.

And now, looking back over my notes from the more than 30 monthly meetings of the Lowell Sesquicentennial Committee, countless sessions with the weekend chairmen and untold numbers of telephone calls, its gratifying to see how much we've accomplished.

This summer, our community will be spotlighted during four weekends chock full of family-oriented fun designed to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the founding of Lowell by Melvin A. Halsted. The town's traditional Labor Day celebration, which actually brings to five the number of sesquicentennial weekend celebrations, will be highlighted by a gigantic fireworks display courtesy of the Sesquicentennial Committee and some very community-minded local businesses — a fitting conclusion to a star-spangled hometown celebration of a very important milestone in Lowell's history.

Getting to this point took planning and lots of hard work. Former Clerk-Treasurer Marcia Carlson, Park Superintendent Thomas Sullivan, local bank manager Nancy Nethery and residents Dan and Linda Adams were the first to step up to the plate and volunteer their time to serve as chairmen of the individual weekend observances.

Once we were able to find the chairmen for our weekend committees, they in turn had to solicit members for their groups and begin meeting separately. Meanwhile, the general committee took on the task of fireworks, souvenir sales and all of the other details that bring a celebration of this magnitude together.

Garland Fish and Opal Nichols hardly ever missed a meeting and could always be counted on to pitch in whenever or wherever needed. Whether it was passing out brochures or helping to staff the Sesquicentennial booth at Oktoberfest, they were there. Orville Corns and Marshall Corns could always be counted on to relay another story about the "Belanger Special" race car which meant so much to so many people in Lowell.

When we lost Bill Dunn in October 2000, his wife, Ruth, graciously accepted the appointment to the board and provided co-chairman Judith Walters and I with her valuable years of experience in community event planning.

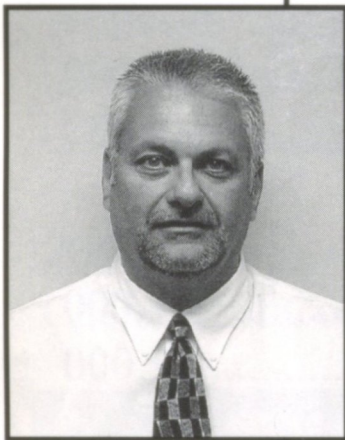
Susan Peterson, who served as committee secretary, held it all together for us. She helped coordinate nearly every aspect of this celebration and kept the shelves of our makeshift sesquicentennial gift shop fully stocked at all times. Dianne Boylan helped produce the final brochure and took on the task of securing radio, television and newspaper advertising for the events.

This history book was truly a labor of love for me. And I would be remiss if I did not thank Edgar and Darlene Corns for everything they did to make this publication a financial success. Town Historian Richard Schmal's years of research provided most of the information for the book and Gregory Jancosek's collection of photographs were invaluable. To all of the people who opened up their photo albums to us, we also extend our gratitude. Lisa Keene of Herff Jones, the book publisher, was invaluable in the final production process.

To everyone who lent a hand or had an encouraging word for us over these past four years, a big THANK YOU!

Sincerely,

Rick Dal Corobbo, Co-Chairman  
Lowell Sesquicentennial Committee







OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204-2797

FRANK O'BANNON  
GOVERNOR

August 2002

Greetings!

As Governor of Indiana, I am pleased to congratulate you as you celebrate 150 years of history on Lowell's Sesquicentennial.

There is a real sense of community found in small towns throughout Indiana. Coming from Corydon, I hold small town values near and dear to my heart. Small towns are a place where your neighbors know who you are. The Sesquicentennial is just one way of keeping that "small town" way of life.

Each of you has enriched your community by being a proud part of the past, the present, and the future as you remember where you came from on Lowell's 150th birthday. It's in the way the people who live there feel about their home and how people come up to you after singing on Easter Sunday and tell you how beautiful you sounded. It's about when you and your neighborhood friends stay out late ice skating, or playing kick-the-can. It's a real sense of knowing your roots because it's where your parents lived and their parents lived.

Judy joins me in sending our best wishes for Lowell's greatest event as you celebrate Lowell's 150th anniversary and become a part of your town's rich history.

Sincerely,

*Frank O'Bannon*

Frank O'Bannon



FOB/nlm







## Colophon

In early 1998, upon the suggestion of then-Town Council President William Dunn, the Lowell Sesquicentennial Committee was formed to plan the observance of the 150th anniversary of the town's founding in 2002.

One of the first ideas the committee came up with was a comprehensive history book which would present the rich past of the community to its younger and newer residents. Earlier history books had been compiled for Lowell's Centennial in 1952 and the Nation's Bicentennial in 1976.

Rick Dal Corobbo, the town's director of administration, with more than 25 years in the newspaper business, and Town Historian Richard Schmal, a lifelong resident of Lowell who had done extensive research on the history of the town and compiled hundreds of columns for the local newspaper, were the logical choice to head up the project.

Local history buff Gregory Jancosek, who had begun putting treasured historic photographs on a CD, offered his assistance. Additional photographs, historical artifacts and personal recollections were contributed from throughout the community.

Edgar and Darlene Corns took on the project of contacting each and every business in town to secure advertising for the history book, garnering a staggering 124 advertisements and collecting a total of \$17,960 in ad revenue to help pay for the publication.

All pages were submitted on zip disk using Adobe PageMaker 6.5 and Photoshop 8.0. The headline font was Arial and the body copy font was Times New Roman.

This book was published by Herff Jones Yearbooks of 6015 Travis Lane, Shawnee Mission, KS 66202 and serviced by local sales representative Lisa Keene at 800-255-6279. With a press run of 500 copies of 152 pages, the book is printed on 80 lb. bordeaux paper bound in 120 lb. white lithotex material custom embossed to feature the sesquicentennial logo in red and blue silkscreen. The discounted rate of \$20 was offered for advertisers and advanced sales. Books were sold for \$25 after delivery in August 2002.



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